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The VEDANTA KESARI

॥ नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः ॥

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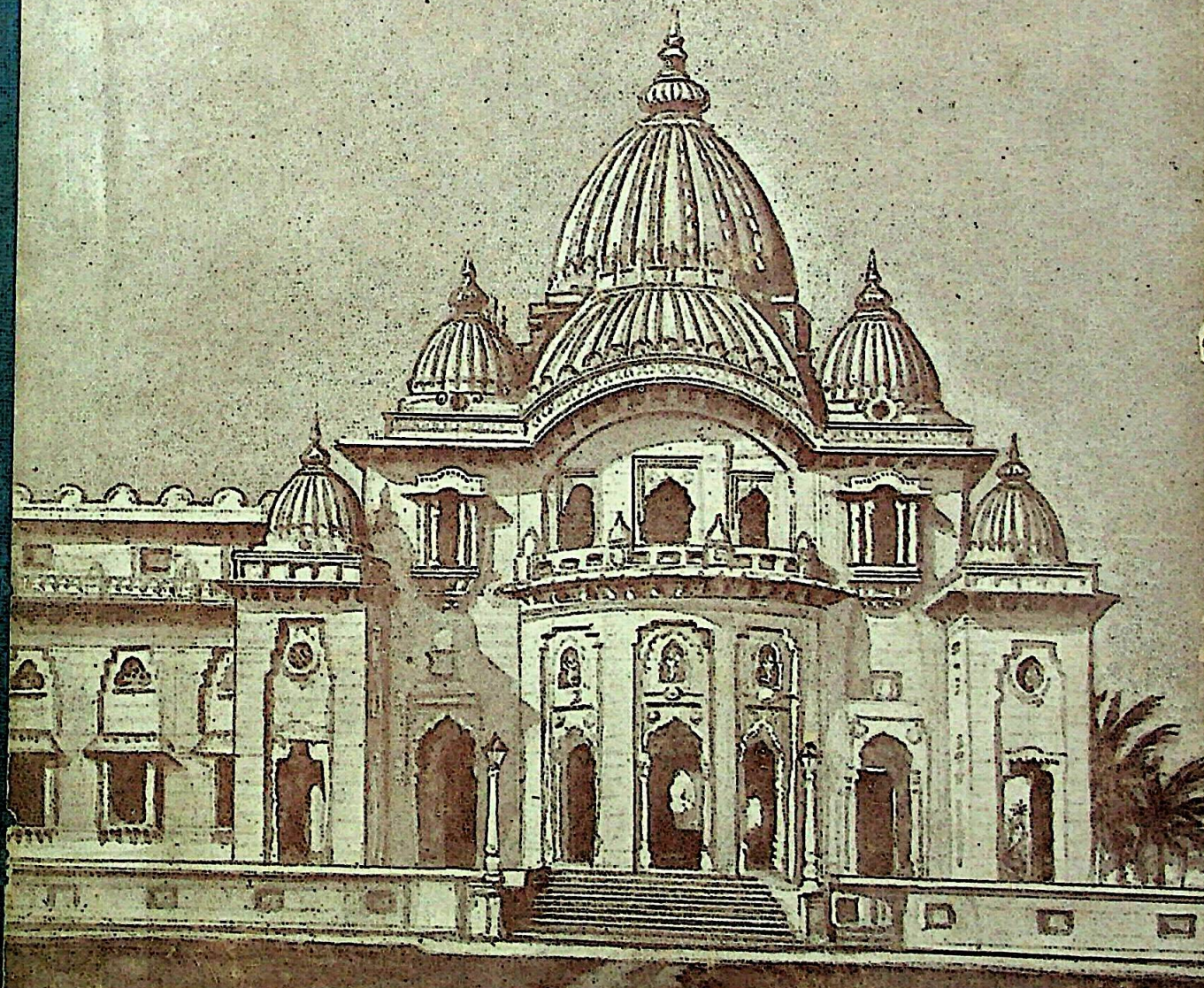

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INDEX TO CONTENTS

PAGE

Abercrombie : East and West—*By R. S. Desikan* .. 151
'Aham', What Do You Mean by—*By S. Subrahmanya Iyer* .. 184
Alambazaar Math and the Inception of the Vow of Service —*By Swami Akhandananda* .. 453, 493
Anguish and the Sense of the Sacred—*By Swami Nityabodhananda* .. 469
Arjun's 'Psalm of Bliss', Guru—*By Har Krishan Singh* .. 193, 240, 268
Beauty, The Goddess of (Poem)—*By Subramania Bharati* .. 147
Brahmacharya—*By Swami Rajeswarananda* .. 111
Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna, Lord (A Study)—*By H. K. Sen* .. 274
Buddhism in Burma—*By Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya* .. 398
CHARAIVETI—*By Subandhu* .. 84, 120, 162, 200, 242, 283, 323, 362, 403, 441, 481
- Apollonius of Tyana .. 200
- Five Elements .. 441
- Mind's Confession .. 120
- Observe, Choose, and Adapt .. 162
- On the way to Holy Mount .. 323
- Prison, Loan and Alienation .. 84
- Removal of Coverings .. 481
- Seeker on the Move .. 283
- Ship's Captain .. 403
- Some Previous Crumbs .. 362
- Where Wisdom and the Gods Lead .. 242

Christ, Become an Imitator of—(Teachings of St. Basil) .. 333
Christian Imperative—*By Floyd H. Ross* .. 109
Christian remain Indian, Can a—*By Mark Sunder Rao* .. 402
Christmas, The Message of—*By K. Kuruvila Jacob* .. 435
Dana in the Gita, Idea of—(*Editorial*) .. 290
Dattatreya, The Path of—*By K. R. R. Sastry* .. 142
Dedication (Poem)—*By Swami Nikhilananda* .. 96
(Durga) Salutations to Her—(*Editorial*) .. 210
Durga, Sri—*By Swami Maithilyananda* .. 214
EDITORIAL .. 2, 90, 130, 170, 210, 250, 290, 330, 371, 410, 450, 490
- Dana in the Gita, Idea of .. 290
- (Durga) Salutations to Her .. 210
- Ramakrishna's Speciality, Sri .. 130
- Reform and the Ramakrishna Movement, Social .. 170
- Self-effort in Spiritual Life .. 90
- Self-negation or Self-expansion .. 490
- Service, The Gospel of, and Tukaram .. 330
- Spiritual Life, The Youth and .. 410
- Sudden Conversion .. 2
- Tapas in the Gita, Idea of .. 250
- Tapas in the Upanishads, Idea of .. 371
- Vivekananda, Why .. 450

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Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

PAGE

Education in a Developing Democracy—*By N. M. Upadhyay* .. 521
Enlightenment, Spiritual—*By Swami Ritajananda* .. 388
Faith, Its Nature and Functions—*By P. Nagaraja Rao* .. 277
Forms, The Spiritual Power of—*By Swami Nityabodhananda* .. 429
Full of Sweetness (Poem)—*By Tagore* .. 510
FUN, IN THE LOVING GUISE OF
1, 89, 129, 169, 209, 249, 289, 329, 369, 409, 449, 489
Gita, Cosmo-genesis in the—*By S. N. Rao* .. 358
(Gita) Kshetra, Yoga and Vibhuti—*By V. B. Athavale* .. 304
God, The Idea of—*By K. S. Ramakrishna Rao* .. 117
Gokulashtami (Poem)—*By K. B. Sitaramayya* .. 186
Grace, Call of (Poem)—*By Har Krishan Singh* .. 475
Guru in Spiritual Life—*By P. Nagaraja Rao* .. 154
Hindu Society, Some Thoughts on the—*By N. C. Zamindar* .. 272
I Know That You Would Come (Poem)—*By U. Talukdar* .. 186
Intelligence—*By Swami Rajeswarananda* .. 344
Justice, Loving—*By N. S. Karanth* .. 220
Kalpataru Day, Musings on the—*By Swami Budhananda* .. 375
Karma, Should We Blame—*By V. K. Pani* .. 439
Keshav Chandra, Philosophical Ideas of—*By Brahmachari Chandan* .. 355
Krishna as Revealed by Sri Ramakrishna, Sri—*By Swami Budhananda* .. 221
Krishna-Ramakrishna Mutuality, Sri—*By Swami Budhananda* .. 253
Krishna—The Beloved (Poem)—*By a Devotee* .. 259
Lalita and Psycho-Therapy—*By A. Krishna Rao* .. 437
Lament Not (Poem)—*By Nanubhai Dave* .. 413
Literature, The Unique in Our—*By N. Seshadrinathan* .. 115
Lord Has Come Into My Dwelling (Poem)—*By a Devotee* .. 228
Mahapurush Maharaj, Reminiscence of—*By Amulya Bandhu Mukherjee* . 118
Master, The (Poem)—*By M. V. B. S. Sarma* .. 267
Materialist Philosophy—*By C. Rajagopalachari* .. 401
Mind, The Constitutive Function of the—*By Swami Prajnanananda* .. 300
Mind, The Monkey Called (Poem)—*By Saint Tayumanavar* .. 374
Mother (Poem)—*By Loku Gehani* .. 502
Motive, Scrutinize Your—*By T. R. Rajagopalan* .. 276
Nature, Man and God—*Swami Nikhilananda* .. 424
NEWS AND REPORTS 88, 127, 167, 208, 248, 288, 328, 368, 408, 447, 487, 528
NOTES AND COMMENTS 85, 121, 164, 201, 243, 285, 324, 363, 404, 442, 483, 524
Argument Loses Its Strength, An .. 285
End of the Year .. 524
Indian Unity and Sanskrit .. 404
Institution, A Vanishing .. 202
Moral Reconstruction of the People .. 324
National Directory of Religion .. 164
On Reading Vivekananda .. 483
Progress Through Freedom .. 121
Rights and Duties .. 363
Religious Sentiment and Provocative Stimulus .. 442

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PAGE

Study of Cultural Heritage .. 243
Sudden Conversion .. 7
Obituary Note on : Manmathanath Ganguly, Bhaktaraj Maharaj, Swami Nirvikarananda, P. Manickasamy Mudaliar, H. B. Shankar Rao .. 128, 207, 364, 408, 528
One and the Many (Poem)—*By Subrahmanya Bharati* .. 239
Oriya Literature, The Ecclesiastical Aspect in—*By Gopal Chandra Mishra* 313
Paradox in Paradise (Poem)—*By Subrahmanya Bharati* .. 346
Pragmatic Reaction to Platonism—*By G. Srinivasan* .. 310
Pranayama—Its Significance—*By T. S. Raghavan* .. 394
Prayer (Poem)—*By K. B. Sitaramayya* .. 499
Raidas, Saint and His Contributions—*By Ramlal* .. 507
Ram Das, Guru—*By Har Krishan Singh* .. 308
Rama, Our Hope for Ever, Sri—*By R. Rangachari* .. 260
Ramakrishna and the Modern Age—*By U. N. Chatterjee* .. 174
Ramakrishna and Vivekananda—*By P. Nagaraja Rao* .. 384
Ramakrishna, From Gadadhar to—*By Huguette Herbert* .. 415
Ramakrishna Paramahamsa—*By T. R. Rajagopalan* .. 414
Ramakrishna—*By Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya* .. 456
Ramakrishna—*By Y. N. Sukthankar* .. 104
(Ramakrishna) The Paramahamsa and the Swami Vivekananda —*By Swami Chidbhavananda* .. 339, 380
Ramakrishna, Thoughts on the Gospel of—*By Swami Gananda* .. 419
Ramakrishna, To Sri (Poem)—*By Nanoobhai Dave* .. 303
Ramakrishna's Mode of Teaching—*By Swami Virananda* .. 264
Ramakrishna's Speciality—(*Editorial*) .. 130
Ramakrishnananda, Swami —*By T. R. Raghava Sastri* .. 137
Ramakrishnananda, Swami—*By P. Ramakrishnan* .. 292
Ramananda—*By Nonika Handoo* .. 278
Rebirth in Ancient Indian Thought, The Philosophy of —*By Viswanath Prasad Varma* .. 462
Reform and the Ramakrishna Movement, Social—(*Editorial*) .. 170
Revealed Knowledge (Vedic Poem)—*By Abinash Chandra Bose* .. 347
REVIEWS AND NOTICES 86, 123, 165, 203, 245, 286, 326, 365, 406, 444, 484, 525
Sabarimalai, Pilgrimage to—*By Swami Suddhasatwananda* .. 511
Sacrifice, The Spirit Underlying the Form of Vedic—*By Jogiraj Basu* .. 148
Sanatkumara's Instruction to Narada—*By M. K. Venkatarama Iyer* .. 352
Sankaracharya, Life and Thought of Sri —*By Brahmachari Ramesh Chaitanya* .. 296
Sarada Devi, The Holy Mother—*By N. K. Krishnamurti* .. 338
(Sarada Devi) Holy Mother Amidst Trials and Toils—*By Sharada* .. 460
Saradananda, Letters of Swami .. 335
Self-effort in Spiritual Life—(*Editorial*) .. 90
Self-negation or Self-expansion—(*Editorial*) .. 490
Service, The Gospel of, and Tukaram—(*Editorial*) .. 330
Singers, The Devout (Vedic Poem)—*By Abinash Chandra Bose* .. 114
Socrates, The Silhouette of—*By S. Subhash Chandra* .. 187
Spiritual Life, The Youth and—(*Editorial*) .. 410

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PAGE

Sudden Conversion—(*Editorial*) .. 2
SUDDEN CONVERSION OF SAINTS AND MYSTICS
Andhra—*N. Bhaktavatsalam* .. 8
Assam—*Birinchi Kumar Barua* .. 10
Gujarat—*R. K. Yajnik* .. 12
Karnataka—*C. K. Prabhu Shankara* .. 17
Kerala—*E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma* .. 19
Maharashtra—*M. A. Karandikar* .. 21
Orissa—*Gaurikumar Brahma* .. 25
Sindh—*G. N. Mathrani* .. 29
Tamilnad—*Swami Paramatmananda* .. 34
Bengal—*Shankar Nath Roy* .. 41
Bengal—*Satchidananda Dhar* .. 45
North India—*Ramlal* .. 50
Buddhist—'*Satyavrata*' .. 56
Buddhist—*Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya* .. 59
Muslim—*M. Hafiz Syed* .. 61
Muslim—*N. B. Chatterjee* .. 63
Christian—*Anthony Elenjimittam* .. 66
Christian—*Wolfram H. Koch* .. 72
A Saint from the 'Ramayana'—*N. Bhaktavatsalam* .. 80
Two Saints from the 'Bhagavata'—*E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma* .. 82
(Sudden Conversion) Five Saints .. 16, 28, 49, 60, 100
Sudden Conversion of Two Saints—*By Wolfram H. Koch* .. 97
(Sudden Conversion) Two Muslim Saints—*By N. B. Chatterjee* .. 102
(Sudden Conversion) Three Saints of India—*By Ramlal* .. 101
Tagore, Theism of Rabindranath—*By Rama Shanker Srivastava* .. 500
Tagore's Philosophy and Religion—*By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri* .. 503
Tapas in the Gita, Idea of—(*Editorial*) .. 250
Tapas in the Upanishads, Idea of—(*Editorial*) .. 371
Totaka—*By B. H. Kapadia* .. 466
Truth, In Search of—*By P. M. Bhaskaran Nambudiripad* .. 156
Vedantasara, Sara of—*By Swami Nikhilananda* .. 476
Vedic Allegories, Two, Quoted by Vyasa in the Gita—*By V. B. Athavale* 516
Vidyaranya on Iswara and Jiva—*By R. S. N. Ramakrishnan* .. 233
'Vijayas', Biographies of the Bhagavat Paadas or
—*By U. Venkatakrishna Rao* .. 349
Vishnu, Hymn Unto (Sanskrit)—*By K. Kunhikavamma* .. 144
Vivekananda, A Hymn to (Murtamaheswaram—Sanskrit)
—*By Sarat Chandra Chakravarti* .. 370
Vivekananda, Homage to Swami—*By Brahmachari Divya Chaitanya* .. 458
Vivekananda, Swami—*By S. S. Raghavachar* .. 496
Vivekananda, The Poet—*By Saraswathi Gowrishankar* .. 229
Vivekananda, Why—(*Editorial*) .. 450
Vivekananda's Ideal of Character-Building Education, Swami—*By Mohini Nakra* 179
WANDERINGS, SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY
—*By Swami Akhandananda* .. 93, 134, 197, 236, 270, 319
Word, The Power of the Divine—*By Sister Savitri* .. 395

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PAGE

World and Motive of Creation, Status of the—*By T. M. P. Mahadevan, K. Panchapakesan, S. Rajagopala Sastri* .. 216
World in the Advaita System—*By R. S. N. Ramakrishnan* .. 519
Yoga and Yogeswara in the Gita, Concept of—*By S. N. Rao* .. 181

INDEX TO REVIEWS AND NOTICES

Bapu As I Saw Him—By Ramnarayan Choudhary .. 165
Basic Education (Periodical)—Edited by Anthony Elenjimittam .. 126
Beautiful Life, A .. 528
Bhagavat Gita—By S. Parthasarathy Iyengar .. 205
Books Acknowledged :
Magazines of Educational Institutions : *Ashram, Mukul, School Magazine of Barahnagar Ramakrishna Mission Ashram Elementary School, Sri Ramakrishna Deepam, Saraswati, Trayee, Viveka, Sandipan* .. 126
Navajivan Publications : *Village Industries, Trusteeship, India's Food Problem, Prohibition at any Cost, Discourses on the Gita, Anecdotes from Bapu's Life, Co-operative Farming, Congress and Its Future* .. 166, 367
Books published from different places : *Light, Power and Wisdom*—By Swami Sivananda ; *The Life Sketch and Quintessence of the Talks of Sadguru Upasani Baba Maharaja* ; *Kavya Lakshmi* (Telugu)—By Mantravadi Subramanyam . 367, 368
Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Culture, Madras .. 447
Call Divine (Periodical)—Edited by Swami Rajeswarananda .. 167, 447
Character and Nation Building—By M. K. Gandhi .. 87
Chetana (Periodical)—Edited by Sudhakar Dikshit .. 327
Chetana's Catalogue (Periodical)—Published by Chetana Ltd. .. 327
Civilization or Chaos—By Irene Conybeare .. 204
Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi—Edited by Arthur Osborne .. 123
Comprehensive Spirituality—By Swami Avyaktananda .. 366
Concept of Mind in Indian Philosophy—By Saraswati Chennakesavan .. 484
Contact Letters—Issued by Martinus Institute of Spiritual Science .. 165
Creative Education—By M. A. Payne .. 125
Deivam and Paurusham (Tamil)—By R. S. N. Ramakrishnan .. 126
Dharmika Hindu (Periodical)—Edited by T. K. Jagannathacharya .. 327
Diary—By Sri Aurobindo Ashram .. 368
Disciple's Lamp—By Swami Yogeswarananda .. 247
Divine Awakener—By Swami Rajeswarananda .. 287
Divine Call (Periodical)—Edited by S. P. Nayar .. 248
Dover Publications : *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*—By Sir Ernest Barker ; *Afterlife in Rome Paganism*—By Franz Cumont ; *The System of Thomas Aquinas*—By Maurice de Wulf ; *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*—By John Locke ; *The World and The Individual*—By Josiah Royce .. 287

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PAGE

East and West Series—By Sadhu T. L. Vaswani—*Pilgrims of Knowledge, The Pebbles on the Sea Shore; Shraddhanjali; The Gita and the Modern World and other Talks* .. 408
Economic and Industrial Life and Relations—By M. K. Gandhi .. 407
Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism—By Lama Anagarika Govinda .. 365
From Log Cabin to White House—By R. K. Dalal .. 205
Future Life—By Swami Yogeswarananda .. 247
Glimpses of Reality—By A. R. I. Shaik Biyabani .. 367
God Realisation Through Reason—By Swami Iswarananda .. 245
Gospel of the Gita—By T. V. Kapali Sastri .. 326
Guru Ramana-vachana-mala—By 'Who' .. 203
Highways of God—By M. P. Pandit .. 287
Hindu Ideal—By Ramananda Sarasvati .. 86
History of Dvaita School of Vedanta and Its Literature —By B. N. K. Sharma .. 525
International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in South East Asia .. 527
Japa—By M. P. Pandit .. 203
Jyoti—Published by Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore .. 87
Kalyan (Hindi Periodical)—Edited by Hanumanprasad Poddar & C. L. Goswami .. 87
Kannada Kavya Tarangini: Kuvempu Tarangah—(Sanskrit Rendering) By C. G. Purushottama .. 207
Kasturba: A Personal Reminiscence—By Sushila Nayar .. 367
Khanda Khadya Sahasrika (Sanskrit-English)—By D. A. Somayaji .. 87
Krishna: His Philosophy & His Spiritual Path—By Bahadur Mal .. 486
Krishnollasa (Sanskrit)—By P. R. Subrahmania Sastri .. 445
Laghu Raja Yoga (Sanskrit-Malayalam)—By Swami Agamananda .. 288
Le Chemin de la Perfection Selon le Yoga-Vedanta (French) —By Swami Nityabodhananda .. 326
Letters of Swami Vivekananda—Published by Advaita Ashrama .. 366
Mahapurush Maharajer Smritikatha (Bengali)—Published by Ramakrishna Shivananda Ashram .. 446
Mahatma Gandhi—By M. Keshava Bhat .. 367
Management Efficiency—By R. K. Murti .. 366
Men of God—By T. V. Kapali Sastri .. 406
Message of Vivekananda—Published by Advaita Ashrama .. 126
Mira (Periodical)—Edited by Gangaram Sajandas .. 248
My Memorable Moments with Bapu—By Manubehn Gandhi .. 204
My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana—By A. Devaraja Mudaliar .. 286
Mystic (Periodical)—Edited by Manjulal S. Desai .. 248
Order of Siddha-Yogins—By Mohan Singh .. 367
Outlines of Vedanta—By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar .. 124
Pictorial History of Philosophy—By Dagobert D. Runes .. 205
Poet (Periodical)—Edited by Krishna Srinivas .. 368, 446
Poornapatram (Sanskrit)—By Sannidhanam Suryanarayana Sastri .. 207
Power of Non-violence—Richard B. Gregg .. 204
Prabodha Sudhakaram of Acharya Sankara (Sanskrit-Malayalam)— Translated by A. Sankara Sarma .. 327

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PAGE

Pushpamala (Sanskrit)—By S. Subrahmanyam .. 327
Quintessence of Vedanta (Sanskrit-English)—By Swami Tattwananda .. 445
Ramadasam (Sanskrit)—By Sannidhanam Suryanarayana Sastri .. 207
Readings from Sankara—By T. M. P. Mahadevan .. 444
Religion and Realization—By 'Diamond' .. 444
Sandhya Vandanam (Tamil)—By 'Anna' .. 166
Seminar on Saints—Edited by T. M. P. Mahadevan .. 87
Six Ways of Knowing—By D. M. Datta .. 444
Skanda Vedapada Stava (Sanskrit)—Edited by P. N. Sivaramakrishnayya 206
Stay with God—By Francis Brabazon .. 205
Survey of Buddhism—By Bhikshu Sangharakshita .. 287
Swami Akhandananda (Bengali)—By Swami Annadananda .. 327
Swami Vivekananda—By M. Keshava Bhat .. 367
Thus Spake Sri Sai—Compiled by P. Venkateswarlu .. 368
Towards Light—By Swami Yogeswarananda .. 247
Tripura Rahasya or the Mystery Beyond the Trinity—By Munagala S. Venkataramaiah .. 365
Udayachal (Bengali Periodical)—Published by Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur .. 446
Uttar Pradesh Ka Sanskritik Paricay (*Hindi*)—By Krishna Datta Vajpeyi 206
Valmiki Ramayan Darshan (Hindi)—Compiled by Rupnarayan K. Sharma 206
Vedanta (French Periodical)—Published by Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna .. 247
Vedanta Explained—By Vinayak Hari Date .. 485
Vedanta Philosophy—By Swami Abhedananda .. 86
Vedapada Stava of Jaimini (Sanskrit)—Edited by P. N. Sivaramakrishnayya 206
Vedas (*A Pure Revelation*)—By C. S. Narayana Rao .. 444
Vision (Periodical)—Edited by M. R. Ramaswami .. 368, 446
Visvabharati Quarterly (Periodical)—Edited by Kshitis Roy .. 486
Vivekachudamani—Published by Sringeri Mutt .. 247
Vivekanandam (Sanskrit)—By S. Suryanarayana Sastry .. 444
Voice of Ahimsa (Periodical)—Published by World Jain Mission .. 126
Voice of the Uninvolved—By C. Rajagopalachari .. 125
Whispers of the Soul and Other Discourses—By Swami Yogeswarananda .. 326
Yoga Psychology—By Swami Abhedananda .. 406
Yoga Sangram (Marathi)—By Shekh Mohamad Baba Shrigondekar .. 206

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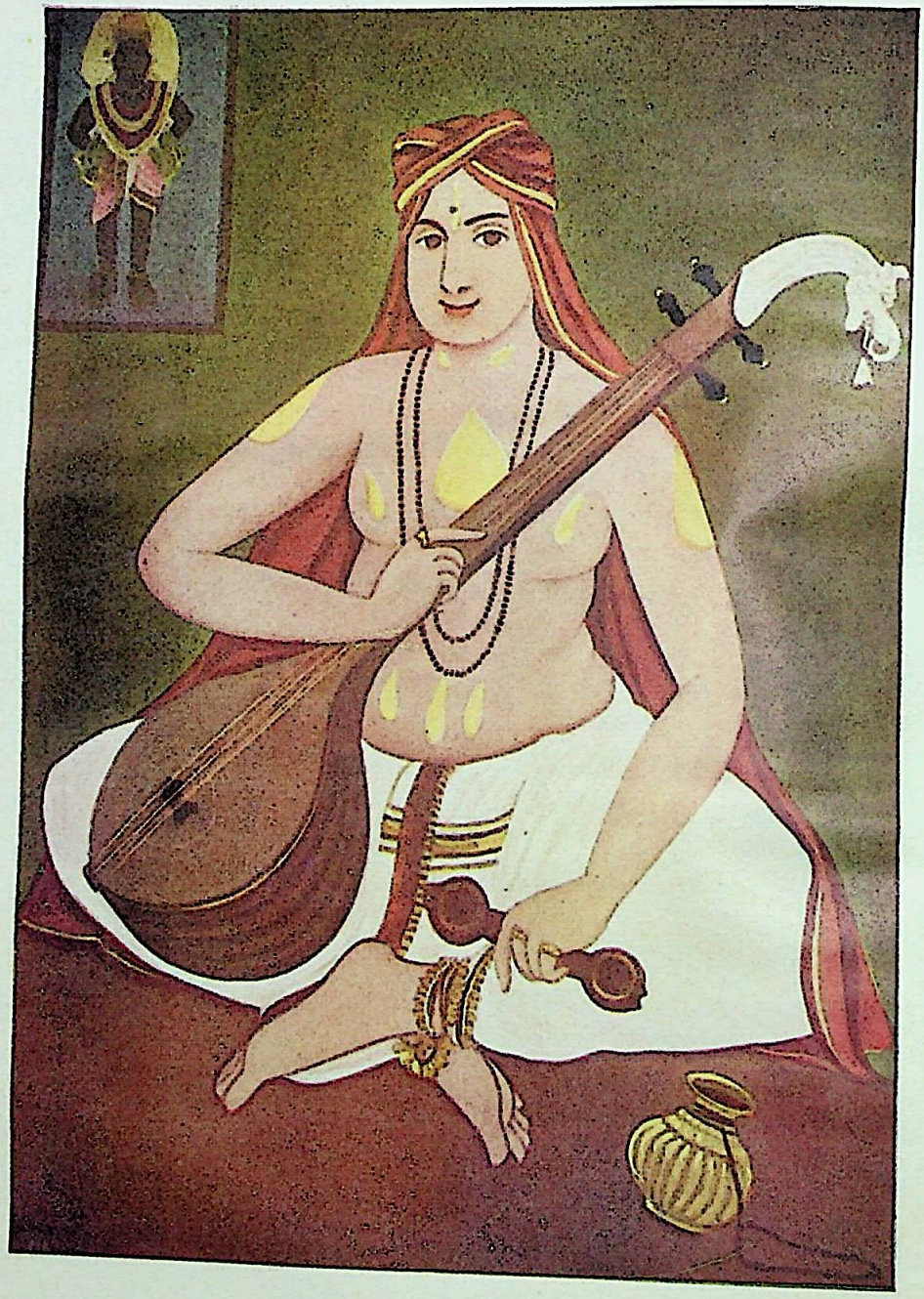

SRI PURANDARADASA

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII | MAY 1960 | No. 1

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

At about eleven o'clock the Brahmos became eager to go home.

Sri Ramakrishna to Keshab: 'Why not stay here tonight?'

Keshab (smiling): 'No, I have business to attend to. I must go.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Why must you, my dear sir? Can't you sleep without the smell of your fish-basket? Once a fishwife was a guest in a gardener's house. She was asked to sleep in a room full of flowers. But she couldn't get any sleep there. (All laugh.) She was restless and began to fidget about. The gardener called to her: "Hello there! Why aren't you asleep?" "Oh, I don't know", said the fishwife. "There are flowers here. The smell keeps me awake. Can't you bring me my fish-basket?" The basket was brought to her. She sprinkled a little water on it and set it near her nose. Then she fell sound asleep and snored all night.

'The bound soul may have realized that there is no substance to the world—that the world is like a hog-plum, only stone and skin—but still he cannot give it up and turn his mind to God!

'The gopis worshipped Katyayani to be united with Krishna. Everyone is under the authority of the Divine Mother, Mahamaya, the Primal Energy. Even Incarnations of God accept the help of Maya to fulfil their mission on earth. Therefore they worship the Primal Energy. Don't you see, how bitterly Rama wept for Sita? "Brahman weeps, ensnared in the meshes of Maya".

'Vishnu incarnated Himself as a sow in order to kill the demon Hiranyaksha. The demon was finally killed; but God would not go back to His abode in heaven. He enjoyed His sow's life. He had given birth to several young ones and was rather happy with them. After consulting among themselves, the gods sent Siva to the sow. Siva came down and urged the Lord to leave the sow-body and return to heaven. But the sow only suckled her young ones. Then Siva destroyed the sow-body with His trident, and the Lord came out, laughing aloud, and went back to His own abode.'

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SUDDEN CONVERSION

'There are two kinds of Siddhas (perfect men), Sadhana-siddhas and Kripa-siddhas (those who have gained perfection through religious discipline and those who have gained perfection through grace). To get a good crop, some have to irrigate their fields with great labour by cutting canals, or by drawing water. But some others are lucky enough to be saved all this trouble of getting water; for there comes the rain and floods the whole field. Almost all have to perform devotional practices assiduously in order to get freedom from the shackles of Maya. But Kripa-siddhas are saved from all this trouble; they attain perfection through the grace of God. Their number, however, is extremely small.'

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

In spiritual communion there is a peculiar fraternity of saints. When we study the lives of holy men and women of different countries we find the two types of them, those who realize God through a definite spiritual discipline passing through gradual development and also those who realize suddenly only through His grace. The latter idea covers a substantial portion of the literature of saints and mystics in the form of confession, autobiography or songs. It is known as sudden conversion, when there is no apparent cause or previous preparation.

The word conversion is from the Latin *conversio* (from *convertere*: to turn or change). Hence conversion means 'a turning about' or changing, transporting or converting. It is used principally in four senses, logical, religious, legal and economic. Of these, we are at present concerned with the religious conversion, not the one of changing religions for good spiritual reason or the debased expression of it in the mass conversion prevalent in some groups. It has been pointed out that "true moral conversion is an actual overturning of values and involves a species of new creation. It has been defined as 'a mutation of life occurring under the impulse of an ultra-terrestrial ideal' (Sante de Sanctis). Or again 'a reaction taking the form of a psychological surrender to an ideal and issuing in moral development' (Underwood). It has been further subdivided into gradual and sudden, or, as De Sanctis calls it, fulminative and progressive, and E. D. Starbuck, impulsive and volitional." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, p. 357.)

Conversion in its real sense involves 'a change from an unorganized life to a life organized around a central idea. When this central idea is God, it may strictly be called a religious conversion. 'It is the most momentous event in the life of every individual and is indispensable to the task of making the best use of that life.' It is thus a psychological phenomenon of profound significance and is perfectly normal. It is the most fundamental change in human character, making it God-centred. The selfish or 'this worldly' outlook is changed completely to an unselfish or 'other worldly' outlook. The material values give place to spiritual values. Its essential feature is the unification of character centred round God involving both a new and intense conviction of the existence of God and a strong sense of obligation to obey His will. In this unifi-

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tion all the faculties and emotions including man's natural instincts and appetites are drawn to a new harmony.

There are various grades of this conversion. But the ideal type is seen in the lives of saints who never turn back after it from God. They lose all attraction for the things of the world. This distaste for things worldly is a counterpart of their positive conviction about God. Often it passes through a conviction of one's sin and utter worthlessness. There are of course conversions which though genuine are of less stable nature. Even they produce great and some lasting effect on the lives of the converts. Conversion gives rise to the formation of new dispositions or 'sentiments' and has often been compared to falling in love. And strangely, it is often found that many saints use erotic vocabulary, especially those following the Bridal Mysticism.

Writers make a distinction of it from similar changes. Counter-conversion in Christian literature refers to the change of a Catholic priest to a free thinker. Reversion is to the older faith. Return refers to the turn to the older life. Development has no overturning of values but is gradual. Recognition involves vital realization and crises of conscience are less searching, as from one party to another.

The time taken for religious conversion varies, though an immediate awareness of the reality of God is clearly discernible. But in the instances of saints like St. Paul, St. Augustine and John Bunyan 'there is evidence of a long preparatory stage and often the whole process appears to move gradually and evenly to its consummation'.

In the Hindu tradition nothing is taken as sudden. There is a distinct process of development. The cases of sudden spiritual awakening that are evident in the lives of saints are explained by a definite development in previous lives and are so due to the results of accumulated merit. When perfection is taken as the innate nature of man, conversion means only the unfoldment of his real nature or recognition, albeit sudden, of this fact.

In Buddhism too the same idea persists. But there are instances of sudden awareness of the transitoriness of life and the realization of enlightenment simply on hearing Buddha preach the Dharma. Even Buddha and Asoka had sudden changes in their lives, definitely turning away from ordinary life. The idea of conversion in religions believing in Karma and rebirth is naturally slightly different from the idea in Christianity. Here the stress is more on gradual development through a slow, determined process of spiritual discipline. But in the lives of many saints the suddenness of awakening to the awareness of God is very clear. Of course, because of the philosophical background, less stress has been given on this suddenness.

In the Hindu tradition, this idea is accepted in this sense. The idea of a second birth with the initiation to Vedic studies making one a dwija, twice-born, is there. The Upanayana ceremony, of having a subsidiary eye, as well as the divya-cakshu, divine eye, mentioned in the Gita, open up a new vision. In them a sort of suddenness is implied. Various types of realized souls have been mentioned in the Gospel of *Sri Ramakrishna*:

> 'There are five kinds of Siddhas (perfect men) found in the world. They are: (1) The Svapna-siddhas, or those who attain perfection by means of dream-inspiration. (2) The Mantra-siddhas, or those who attain perfection by means of a Mantra or sacred 'name' of God. (3) The Hathāt-

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siddhas, or those who attain perfection suddenly, like a poor man who at once becomes rich by finding a hidden treasure or by marrying a rich wife. Similarly, many who are sinful somehow become pure all of a sudden and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. (4) The Kripā-siddhas, or those who attain perfection through the grace of God. As a man in clearing a forest may discover some ancient tank or house and himself need not construct one with pain and trouble, so some fortunately become perfect with very little effort on their own part. (5) The Nitya-siddhas, or those who are ever perfect. As the vine of a gourd or pumpkin brings forth first its fruit and then its flower, so the ever perfect soul is born a Siddha, and all his seeming exertions after perfection are merely for the sake of setting an example to humanity.'

The broader division of saints through efforts or grace will cover the first four types. But grace of God is essential even for efforts. Discussion is there in mystical literature about the place of grace and free will in this experience. The Catholics hold that 'sacraments convey grace and confer character'. The Protestants consider that 'sacraments declare in symbolic form a change which has already taken place as the result of an act of faith on the part of the individual'. All the devotional schools generally stress on the grace of God. It is needless to say, grace of God is the predominant factor, but for lasting effect a long effort has been found to be essential. Anyway, it is with regard to the suddenness of the external manifestation of the change that we use the term sudden conversion.

A dramatic change is common in all such conversions of not only those who became saints but others also. But still each one is unique in its expression. There are, however, certain broad types. Often the drama of conversion centres in 'the birth of a new and higher se hood', integrating, healing, energizin Starbuck has pointed out that despite considerable number of backslidings a recurrences of struggles with old at tudes and habits (about 40%), it a pears, from an intimate study of ma hundreds of confessions, that somethi of permanent value is carried over in later years. Psychologists consider co version fundamentally as 'a blossomin or fruition, of the basic biological a psychological urges and drives'. Tal sublimation the saints practise is o higher type. As it has been said by writer :

> Is not this event, however, a sublimati also of self regard, (the seeking of perso salvation) ; of fear, (of final destruction of gregariousness, (fellowship of t saints) ; of self-expression, (missiona zeal) ; of appreciation, (the beauty of ho ness) ; and perhaps a dozen or score other fundamental 'instincts' or propen ties, which in their blending or fusion co stitute the kingdom of righteousness in t heart. The sweet singer of Israel, realiz the majesty and glory of the heavens a of the universe, exclaims 'The Law of t Lord is perfect converting (or restorin the soul.' (V. Ferm : *Encyclopaedia Religion and Ethics,* p. 202.)

Conversion signifies the resolution of conflict e.g., between sin and righteou ness, involves a change of values a acceptance of a faith 'unto salvation Ethical conversion consists in having positive attitude towards morality.

With all this discussion in tracing t nature and suddenness of conversio we must not forget that this idea is little wide and away from the orthod meaning of the word. The outstandi lives of definite preparation, growth a culmination, of years of religious de tion and service are before our ey And the vast majority of the people w

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ccept spiritual disciplines consciously, lso will fall in the category of gradually eveloping persons. The effect of the trong emotional experience that is felt uring the awakening must be permaent. 'The test of a conversion lies not n the form which it takes but in the ompleteness with which it results in a ife of which God has become the inspiation, centre and goal'.

For conversion a sort of a psychologiAl crisis is essential. If it is absent, then t can be called a gradual development. t is precisely because of this stress on risis, it is found in many religious sects hat a sort of an eager expectation is ept up, ending ultimately in a crisis. enerally this sudden change occurs in ersons who are highly emotional. And s emotion is predominant in many eople, its importance cannot be minised. To such people things and alues which were till now marginal and ague, suddenly become focal and clear y defined. But that may not mean a eep instantaneous final illumination. t is held in practically all the systems hat on hearing of God, Truth, Mahavakyas or Mantras, an immediate illumination takes place. But generally a long practice of contemplation, japa and repetition is necessary for the consummation. John Bunyan considered his conversion starting from the time when he began a higher life but he had to pass through different stages of mystic suffering to get the unification.

Among the Christian sects the Methodists, Salvationists and others give much stress on this factor. John Wesley's idea of a 'new birth' which is a rebirth from sin and profanity is well known. The evangelists believe in this to a great degree. This is why it is found that some of the noted evangelists create a congenial mood through their lectures or services, in which such changes take place, not to a few but to a large number of people. It will be considered valuable only if it has a lasting effect, and is not a momentary thing resulting from emotional upheavals and loss of emotional balance. Some of the devotional sects in India practise this type of upheaval through singing and dancing. But unfortunately the effect is often demoralizing. It has been pointed out that a little rising of the Kundalini Power may give rise to some visions etc. If it is not backed up by definite moral and spiritual preparation, the mind is apt to go much down when the spell is over.

Much study has been made of conversion by writers on mysticism, theology as well as by psychologists, both sympathetic and critical. It has been pointed out that a large number of cases occur during adolescence. This seems to be needless for our purpose, for scores of other instances are available of older people having this experience. However, the opinion of the writer on Conversion in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* regarding psychlogical conversion of all people seems to be a balanced one.

> 'The most that can be said is that the period between ages of 15 and 25 is the time when the greatest changes occur in human personality, and that therefore this is the most propitious epoch for the occurrence of decisive events in the history of individuals. Adolescence is only an extrinsic or indirect cause, a provocative stimulus to an intellectual and ethical transformation which requires for its completion the additional presence of a psychic factor. Indeed, the psysiological causes of conversion can be greatly exaggerated.'

From the study of the views of the writers some favourable conditions for the conversion have been given in the above article.

1. The presence of general religious tendencies deriving either from heredity, from

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the family or from earlier impressions. 2. An habitual tendency of the intellect towards absolute convictions. 3. A tendency of the individual spontaneously to fix the attention beyond and above the realities of the senses. 4. A richness of affective potential or psychic energy held in suspension by the individual. 5. The tendency of the individual to transfer his chief interests to questions of origin, purpose, destiny and so forth. 6. The recurrence of painful experiences.

This is true about general conversion in the psychological sense. Spiritual conversion is more definite and all-consuming. By the very nature of the experience, the sudden conversion does not seem to be predictable in point of time.

The fact that many such mystics have left behind them their autobiographies or experiences in songs, shows that their emotional experience created a deep impression in them because of its depth and suddenness. On the other hand, many other illumined saints and holy men who passed through a definite preparation and development were not struck by its uncommonness to feel it necessary to narrate it.

In the religious tradition more importance is given to definite discipline. And different experiences following particular sadhanas have been meticulously described. The yogis consider the suddenly converted saints and prophets as 'stumbling into religion'. Of course, the later flowering forth of their life takes away the sting from this remark. As for lesser people, it is felt that their capacity is limited and that is why so much of upheaval and external manifestation are seen in them. As Sri Ramakrishna said :

'Do you know the nature of this ecsta It is like boiling one ounce of milk in a pan. The pan seems to be full of m but remove it from the stove and you wo not find a single drop. Even the li quantity that was there would have all st to the pan.'

This sudden change in the life is essential, though however in every c there is evidence of some suddenne at least during the first awakening higher values, even if the change is dramatic. Of course, the idea th without it no spiritual realization possible cannot be accepted, for th are hundreds of other saints, and t vast majority of saints as a matter that, in whose lives there was no dram tic change.

However, the idea of sudden conve sion must be accepted as occurring in spiritual realm. As it produces saint characters it is surely of profound sig ficance. The study of the lives of sai is for both individual good and soc betterment. In the development of saintly qualities lies the ultimate so tion of all human problems. The li of saints, as we have seen, point out th a large number of them were lead ordinary lives till an awareness of G suddenly dawned on their consciousne Such examples will hearten man th weak though he is, he has the requi spiritual potential which can deve when the grace of God descends on hi Then all doubts will vanish and spirit certainty will replace despair, uncerta ties and fears. Then will the life raised, in the words of Dr Radhakris nan, above 'the meaningless existen of dull despair' and have direction purposiveness which are so essential the contemporary world.

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SUDDEN CONVERSION OF SAINTS AND MYSTICS

[EDITORIAL NOTE: In the *Editorial* we have discussed about the nature of sudden conversion. Writers on mysticism characterize it with instantaneous illumination, distinguishing it from gradual development. But J. A. H. Murray's *A New English Dictionary* gives the significant meaning of conversion saying, 'In the medieval Church: Change from the secular to the "religious" life; entering into monastic life'. Now, this meaning will be applicable to a large number of saints who had gradual development in realization but suddenly renounced the worldly life. It cannot be ignored also that even renouncing the worldly life would not be possible unless there was an awareness of the transitoriness of life and the reality of the ultimate truth. In suddenness is from the before to the after with very little gap of time.

In this series we have taken the broader meaning and covered all the men of God who had a sudden change in their life, either with instantaneous spiritual illumination or with a spiritual awakening leading to it. None of the saints, it will be seen, thereafter reverted to the ordinary life, probably with the exception of one or two who did not change their outer life but had inner detachment and change of attitude after the experience.

As for the term saints, we have used it here in a very broad sense, meaning all holy men and women who gave up the worldly pursuits for the communion with the Divine, whatever the philosophical conception of God may be. That there is an interconnection between different yogas or approaches has been pointed out by Swami Vivekananda. In a recent book on saints, the Editor, Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, argues in the same line and says:

> The saint's approach to reality is said to be more emotional; whereas that of the sage is regarded as more intellectual. But this again is a distinction which is not absolute. In India, the saints have been known for their sagely qualities and the sages for their saintly character. No one will deny, for instance, that the saint Ramakrishna was also a sage and the sage Ramana was a saint as well. The bhakta (devotee) and the jnani (one with wisdom) are, it is true, distinguished by some people. But the devotion of the genuine bhakta is not purely an emotion, having nothing to do with knowledge, nor is the wisdom of the jnani the result of intellection without emotional sublimation. In certain schools of philosophy, one or the other of the two paths, bhakti and jnana, may find relatively greater stress. Nevertheless the need for both is recognized in all of them.
>
> The term 'saint' will cover, then all these types of spiritual genius: jnanis like Suka, bhaktas like Narada, raja-yogis like Visvamitra, and karma-yogis like Janaka. These, however, are not exclusive types; Suka, the Wise was a devotee as well; Narada, the devotee, possessed wisdom too; and the same is the case with Visvamitra and Janaka. All of them had wisdom, devotion, self-control and the spirit of service. (*A Symposium on Saints*, pp. 8-9.)

In the devotional literature Avataras and Prophets have a unique place and they are considered to be Nityasiddhas or the ever-perfect ones. They have a human-divine personality. We speak of their spiritual awakening, only when we look at them from the human side.

The present series on the sudden spiritual awakening of saints is not an exhaustive one. The arrangement is rather arbitrary. Different writers have written anecdotes of conversion of some saints from their respective areas. A few from Christianity, Islam and Buddhism also have been included, most of them being from outside the country. A few incidents from the scriptures also have been noticed. It is however to be noted that very meagre information is available regarding Indian saints and much controversy is there among the scholars about their lives and activities. Mostly the anecdotes are based on the traditional account available or autobiographical references met with in the songs and other compositions of saints.

The lives of holy men have very little reportable activity. Anecdotes of miracles are

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the only thing available in many cases. In sudden conversion this element is more preponderant and hence several such have been mentioned by writers in this series also.

Practically, all the areas of India have been represented. Similarity in anecdotes will be seen in the cases of Vilvamangal and Tulsi. Vilvamangal or Lilasuka, it should be mentioned, is claimed by different States. Anecdotes of a few more saints will be published later. The contributors, mostly hailing from the particular areas, have been introduced in the *Notes and Comments*.]

Sudden Conversion of Saints

ANDHRA

(*VEMANA*)

N. BHAKTAVATSALAM

Vemana has a legitimate place in the galaxy of those who got a sudden awakening from illusion to true knowledge. His biography as narrated in the different parts of the Andhra Desa is a glowing illustration of the inscrutable ways of Providence.

His thirst for knowledge of the ultimate reality, his fearlessness and boldness in proclaiming the truth in the interests of humanity, his keenness of observation, his poetic skill and his subtle humour make him peerless among the great men of Andhra history.

Vemana was not the founder of any religion. He travelled widely in the Andhra Desa and preached religion in homely and immortal verse. He so captivated the hearts of his hearers that they revered him as being next to none of the great founders of religion.

The preface to *Vemana-Sukti-Ratnavali* gives Vemana's story as follows :— Of the Reddi kings (1328-1428 A.D.) who ruled over Kondavidu the last was Racha Vema Reddi. Narasamba was his consort. His own younger brother was our Vemana. Their parents were Mallamma and Komaragiri Vema Reddi. For some time Vemana revelled in inordinate adultery, and was recklessly squandering gold. By a very clever device Narasamba brought home to Vemana the certain ruin of a libertine, and overnight he got transformed into a dutiful householder. Abhirammayya, the goldsmith of the Royal Court, by his devotion propitiated one Lambika-Sivayogi, who promised to initiate him on an appointed day into the secrets of spiritual knowledge. Coming to know of the promise, and so manipulating the circumstances that the goldsmith could not go to the Yogi on the appointed day, in his stead Vemana presented himself. Displeased with Abhirammayya's failure to turn up, and moved by Vemana's earnestness, the Yogi initiated him. After initiation, knowledge dawned on Vemana and he dedicated himself to the propagation of truth and knowledge among the common people throughout the length and breadth of the Andhra Desa. He truly repented for the trick he had played on Abhirammayya, begged his pardon and immortalised his name by including it in every one of his thousands of verses. At the end Vemana came to Katarapalle and there entered Mahasamadhi.

There is a temple of Vemana in the village called Nallacheruvu in the Kadiri Taluk. Sri R. Anantakrishna Sarma, in his book on Vemana, gives the following version of the saint's biography as told by Chennayya, the temple-priest. Vemana hailed from Kondavidu. His original name was Pulla Reddi. Owing to differences with his elder brother he came to Nallacheruvu and lived there in tillage. One day he suddenly died, hit by lightning. Immediately he appeared in a dre-

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efore his relatives, bade them not to cremate s body, and came back to life on the eighth ay. After resurrection he assumed the name Vemana, performed many miracles, gather- many disciples, travelled far and wide reading knowledge. His mother Achchamma, ed at Koduru, his wife, Adilakshmamma, ed at Kuchcherlapadu. He got tombs built r them in those two villages. He himself tered Mahasamadhi at Katarlapalle.

Among Vemana's biographers, the late Van- ri Subba Rao claims him for the Godavari istrict depending on one stray reference to at river in his multi-thousand verses. He aces him in the 15th century. Sir C. P. rown places the poet in the second half of e 17th century. Sri R. Anantakrishna Sarma aces him in the first half of the 18th cen- ry. Further he claims the poet for the ceded stricts, citing the many colloquialisms of that cality found in his verses. Howevermuch ese versions and theories appeal to the senti- ents of their protagonists, they cannot wholly accepted as authentic history, for which we safely rely on Vemana's own verses ecause he was one given to the naked exposi- ion of unadulterated truth.

The following facts may be culled from his tterances :—

(1) By caste he was a Kapu Reddi. The eddis were originally independent kings, then udatory chiefs and even subsequently they ere quite affluent, noble and cultured. emana's verses reveal all these traits of him. 2) His education was not of the bread-earn- g type but of the man-making type. He seems have had a good taste for music. He knew edicine and astrology. (3) His deep devo- on to Siva was free from hatred for any ther deity. (4) Right from the beginning he as bent on knowing and realising the goal of life. (5) Living amidst desolute rulers and people abandoned to vice, Vemana, too, for a time turned libertine. His elders, however, could transform him into a dutiful householder. (6) But before long his wife and son(s) turned rebellious. Utter poverty and an unhappy home drove him to despair. (7) He thought he could drown his sorrows by dedicating himself to the service of the afflicted. Whatever he had, he freely gave away to the needy. For their sake, he accepted mercenary service first under the Government and then even privately. (8) When legitimate sources failed he felt called upon even to transgress in order to procure the wherewithal to serve the deserving. (9) Not content with other means he turned to Rasavada or Alchemy whereby to transmute other metals into gold. For this he sought the help of goldsmiths extolling them in some of his verses. Disappointment provoked his dislike for them and he sang some verses condemning them. (10) To learn Alchemy he approached Lambika Sivayogi, but that contact worked on Vemana as alchemy. From illusion he woke up into the knowledge of the ultimate reality. He practised Sadhanas under the guidance of his Guru. From Hathayoga he passed on to Rajayoga and the Kundalini in him was awakened. Finally he experienced samadhi and thus described the Jiva-Brahma-aikya :—

> Turning to you I stand in light
> Turning to me I am immersed in illusion
> Knowing you is knowing myself.

(11) Of a god-commissioned Guru one touch or one look can effect instantaneous transformation in his disciple. Having experienced such a transformation, Vemana sang :—

> The accumulated sins of countless lives
> Vanished by a single touch of the True Guru
> What the potter takes an year to do
> One stroke of the mace suffices to undo.

Conversion, then, is 'the larger world-consciousness now pressing in on the individual consciousness. Often it breaks in suddenly and becomes a great new revelation. This is the first aspect of conversion : the person emerges from a smaller limited world of existence into a larger world of being. His life becomes swallowed up in a larger whole'.

(Underhill : *Mysticism*, p. 214.)

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ASSAM

(*MADHAVADEVA*)

BIRINCHI KUMAR BARUA

The seed of neo-Vaishnavism was spread in Assam in the sixteenth century by Sankaradeva (1449-1569). During his missionary work, Sankaradeva stayed for sometime at Dhuyahat, a place in the present Majuli island, Sibsagar district. It was at this place Sankaradeva in 1522 A.D. met with Madhavadeva destined to be his first greatest apostle and the most redoubtable exponent of the tenets of Sankaradeva's *bhaktidharma*. The incident which led to this meeting and subsequent conversion of Madhava to Sankara's creed is equally interesting and illuminating.

Madhavadeva was a Kayastha born in 1489 at Letekupukhuri, in the present Lakhimpur district. He was educated in the traditional learning and in his youth became a great scholar. Madhava was an upholder of the Sakti worship, which dominated the religious faith of the Assamese people of the time. Once, on the occasion of his mother's illness, Madhavadeva made a vow that he would sacrifice a goat before the Goddess if his mother recovered. His mother did recover and Madhava asked his brother-in-law Gayapani to find out a goat for the purpose. Gayapani had already been converted to *bhaktidharma* of Sankaradeva, and under various pretexts he evaded his commission. One day a tumultuous altercation ensued between Madhava and Gayapani, regarding merits of sacrifice and Madhavadeva derided very much the creed propagated by Sankara. Gayapani, however, replied that Madhava might think very highly of Sakta faith but his faith would not stand ground before Sankaradeva.

Madhava then expressed his desire to meet Gayapani's guru Sankara and to hold a discussion on the issue. The next morning Gayapani led Madhava to Sankaradeva's residence and a great controversy ensued between these two religious leaders over the respective merits of worship of various Sakta goddesses con ing of sacrifices and the adoration of the Supreme Being in the form of Vishnu-Kris Madhava cited verses from various script to defend Sakta worship and the *pra marga*, the path of attachment to the wo Sankaradeva, on the other hand, quoted *slo* after *slokas*, in support of his Ekasaran-*dha* (surrender to One Supreme God) and *ni marga*, the path of detachment. The dis sion continued for more than four hours each leader brought in evidences from s tural sources. At the close of the day, S kara pronounced the following sloka from *Bhagavata-purana* :

> *Yatha taror mula-nisecanena*
> *tripyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasakhah*
> *pranohaharacca yathendriyanam*
> *tathaiva sarvarhanam acyutejya.*

'As the branches, leaves and foliage of a are nourished by pouring water only at the of the tree, as the limbs of the body are nou ed by putting food only in the stomach, s Gods and Goddesses are propitiated only by worship of Krishna.'

Suddenly, Madhava's mind was illumin with a new meaning, and he bent down head before Sankaradeva in reverence. then and there realised the purity and subli of *bhakti-dharma* and requested Sankar accept him as disciple and to show him path of supreme realisation. Madhava already betrothed to a Kayastha girl but this illumination he broke off the engagem For realisation of the truth and for the c of the new faith Madhava renounced the w once for all.

From then Madhavadeva became Sank deva's shadow, his most accomplished faithful follower. The religious movement gained a great impetus by his conversion. in him was the force of intellect and

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rength of character imperative for a great cial reformer and bulwark of religion. lmost against Sankaradeva's wishes Madhaideva remained a celibate throughout his e ; and his ideal brought into being a monas- order called *Kewaliyas* (the life-celibates). fact Madhavadeva is regarded as the real under of the satra (monasteries) institution, r he organised it on a firmer footing and troduced a very rigorous and disciplined onastic code. Further, he advocated comete allegiance to his guru Sankaradeva, the w of chastity and poverty.

A master of traditional learning, Madhavaeva was also a mellifluous singer. His musical lent and devout nature found expressions in e devotional songs, full of passionate notions. In many of his hymns, known as *argits* there breathes a deep note of contrition nd humility in the knowledge of his own sin, nd a spirit of extreme self-surrender. Many f his *Bargits* contain idyllic description of rindaban with Child Krishna as the central gure. Madhavadeva also composed a few *lnkiya nats,* religious dramas, all presenting ncidents of Krishna's child life. At the irection of his guru Madhavadeva rendered nto Assamese verse the *Bhakti-Ratnavali* of Visnupuri Sanyasi. With the creation of these vorks the genius of Madhavadeva came of ge and he produced from the simplest and weetest works of poetry to most difficult vritings on abtruse metaphysical subjects. He narshalled all his varied powers born out of is penetrative intellect, comprehensive knowedge and deep erudition to establish Sankaraeva's system on firm and secure foundation. Viewed from this point Madhavadeva's *magnum opus,* the supreme achievement of Assamese Vaisnavite hymnic rapture, the *Nama-ghosha* known also as *Hajari Ghosha* (a book of thousand couplets) occupies a unique place in the philosophical literature of Assam, nay of India. It is not only widely read but memorised and freely quoted as scriptural text and thus no doubt is an enduring prop of Assamese Vaisnavism. The philosophy of Madhavadeva as revealed in *Namaghosha* divides itself in different sections, namely *Maya,* its nature and effects : cosmology of the universe : *Brahman* ; means of self-realisation : psychology of the *Jiva* : the goal of human life.

Besides, *Nama-ghosha* contains a large number of hymns on repentance and entreaty, self-discipline and self-reproach. In each of the hymns the lyric cry is predominant and ecstatic. The last few sections of the book serve as a litany consisting of eulogistic names of Lord Krishna. *Nama-ghosha* bears a universal appeal and is in perfect accord with the same class of sublime literature as the *Upanishads* and *Gita.* Profundity of thought, unity of outlook, and music of expression mark *Nama-ghosha* as a foremost work of art and a fitting monument to Madhavadeva's poetic genius.

Sankaradeva, before his death nominated Madhavadeva to the apostolic seat discarding the claims of his son, who was also a devout Vaisnava. Madhavadeva outlived Sankaradeva by twenty-eight years. During this period, Madhavadeva brought the messages of *Ekasaraniya-dharma* to the remotest corner of the country and set up for this purpose through his disciples many satras or monasteries. He died in 1596 at Bheladuar satra, near modern Cooch-Behar.

All conversion entails the abrupt or gradual emergence of intuitions from below the threshold, the consequent remaking of the field of consciousness, an alteration in the self's attitude to the world. But in the mystic this process is raised to the *n*th degree of intensity, for in him it means the first emergence of that genius for the Absolute which is to constitute his distinctive character : and emergence enormous in its effect on every department of his life. Those to whom it happens, often enough, are already 'religious' : sometimes deeply and earnestly so.

(Underhill : *Mysticism,* p. 214.)

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GUJARAT

R. K. YAJNIK

Saints live holy lives and are sometimes great teachers. Often these religious teachers do not speak much but hold their lives as mirror before suffering humanity in order that seekers may know how to dress before them. They all agree on certain fundamentals and the points of difference are indeed very few. The saints of all times and climes have been the embodiments of the three cardinal virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. From Moses to Mahatma Gandhi, we have the most brilliant galaxy of saints throughout the ages. Some are definitely styled 'Saints' such as Saint Paul, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Ignatius of Loyola.[1]

As we all know, the most celebrated event of sudden conversion took place in the life of *Lord Buddha*. As a crown-prince of a great principality, he lived an epicurian life of great luxury with his beautiful wife. One fine morning when he left his luxurious castle, he saw an aged man broken with the weight of years, a beggar suffering from loathsome disease and a naked corpse : and his charioteer, Chhana, explained that 'it was the common lot of humanity'. From that moment, he experienced sudden conversion and renounced all the glories and beauties of life in an instant.

From times immemorial, our *Puranas* and epics, provide a rich heritage of saints and seers who have been celebrated throughout the centuries. *Saint Dhruvaji* furnishes the most perfect example of sudden conversion in our traditional style. This young prince of seven went to his father's Court and claimed his right to sit on the lap of His Majesty. But the step-mother, who was the king's hot favourite, raised a strong objection to this type of endearment of the young son by his father. She spoke harsh words in public : 'If you want to take your seat at the place desired, you must be born again as my child ; otherwise, your future is blasted as it is'. Dhruvaji at once took to heart the cruel words of his mother and that very moment renounced world and went to the thick forest for pena and self-realisation. His great success his Hindu axiomatic truth.

Take another great instance of sudden version in the ancient time, the traditio sudden conversion of *Raja Gopichand*. young handsome king was in perfect enjoym of all his senses and his young beau queens were rubbing scented oils to his b and pouring cool fragrant water over him. the midst of this luxury of bath redolent youth, beauty and joy, the king experien a few drops of hot water and looked up saw his dear mother Menavati in tears. Th he realised the truth regarding what ailed mother pertaining to the evanescent hu happiness ; he renounced the world and t Holy Orders of the saints and seers in traditional Hindu style.

These types of sudden conversions may contrasted with other types of inborn supr indifference towards the worldly attractions wealth, beauty and power and a strong urg leave home and go out far in the fores search of the eternal life. Instances are vided of such types by Bhakta Prahlada Shri Adi Shankaracharya.

The classic instance amongst the ortho Hindus of sudden conversion, in the Mi Ages, is pertaining to the *Saint Bhartrih* The legend of the immortal fruit is univers known. The king Bhartrihari received f a *Rishi* a peculiar fruit of celestial qu yielding the blessings of immortality to who eats it. The king did not eat it but pas it on to his dearest queen Pingla. She did eat it but passed it on to her dearest lo the man of the Royal Horse Guard. He not keep it but gave it to his favourite Co zan. She in her turn felt sad at the ide attaining immortality during her life of sin shame and therefore took the fruit back to

[1] *Religious Leaders*, Thomas & Thomas (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay).

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ing himself, as the best person who should be blessed with immortality. Thus, the fruit eturned after turning a full cycle; and that his very moment, after a careful inquiry in details, nced he decided to renounce the world; and accord- penang to the rules of Holy Orders, he addressed ess his favourite wife as 'Mother Pingla', while begging alms at her palace-door.

den o In India, in modern times, we speak of aditio political saints such as the Saint of Varsova d. And the Saint of Sabarmati. Although the njoym matter's fight for the political independence of eaut India received world recognition, he was styled his b 'Mahatma', because of his life of poverty and him. elfless service. We speak of Ramana Ma- ent arshi as the Saint of Arunachalam and Shri erien Aurobindo as the Saint of Pondicherry. We up associate with the lives of these saints the . Highest possible type of plain living and high ailed thinking.

hun Gujarat has produced great saints, such as nd t Narsinh Mehta, Akho-Bhagat, Jala-Bhagat and in host of others. Each religious sect is natu- ally proud of its saints who have lived pious mayives after renouncing the world. It may be supr Buddhism, Jainism or the cult of Shiva, tions Vishnu, Swaminarayan or others.

urg There is this major distinction between orest Saints and Saints: As we believe in *Moksha* are for emancipation of the soul as the *summum* nda *bonum* of life, we attach more importance to ndividual search after God or the beatific rtho vision of God. Selfless service of humanity is Mi more of a Christian virtue than a matter of rtrih the Hindu faith which is more interested in vers ndividual salvation. The question is this: d fr How do the saints evolve their lives? In the qua course of their advancement in life do the to Saints live a horizontal life of a slow process pas of development towards self-realisation or do did they experience vertical conversion i.e., a sud- t lo den change in their lives, at the most crucial He moment when they are at cross-roads? The Cou supreme instance provided by Gujarat is of idea *the Saint of Sabarmati*. About one experience sin that changed the course of his life in South to Africa, he tells us that he was travelling with a first class ticket and he was turned out of his compartment to make way for a European passenger. In the midnight cold at Maritzburg, he was not allowed to enter even a Waiting Room, because he was black. Then the moment of sudden conversion came. Should he go back to India and make lots of money? Or should he stay in South Africa and start his lifelong struggle on the basis of the pursuit of Truth and Non-violent Non-co-operation? The world knows his choice at that most critical moment. This is what we call vertical or sudden conversion.

The poet *saint Narsinh Mehta* was an idle wandering devotee who contributed nothing to the family income. They were not rich and the elder brother's wife one day lost her balance of mind and spoke harsh words to the sensitive Narsinh. At this critical moment of his life, he decided not to pocket this insult but to struggle for himself with supreme faith in Providence. At that very moment he left his home for good. The story goes that he practised severe penance and by his life of dedication, he was found fit and worthy to receive the blessings of the Beatific Vision of the '*Rasa-Lila*' at the Gopinath temple. The rest of the story of this saint is known in every home of Gujarat.

Another Poet-Saint who had known vertical conversion in Gujarat was *Akho-Bhagat*. He was a goldsmith, well-versed in his craft and doing excellent business. He had no sister of his own, but loved one sister who was more to him than all the relatives of the world put together. That lady knew his brotherly attachment and brought to him some gold for her necklace. Akho-Bhagat put a little more of his own, as his special gift, and put all his skill as an artisan for the perfect quality of the golden necklace. The lady, of course, was pleased with the performance. She, however, foolishly gave ear to all sorts of insinuations and began to doubt the *bona fides* even of her brother 'Akhabhai'. She took the necklace to another goldsmith for finding out the exact weight and quality of the gold, to test her

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brother's so called devotion to her sister. Of course, she found that there was little more of a gold of the best quality. She naturally felt indeed sorry that she had for the moment lost confidence in her brother. But the story reached the ears of the goldsmith and that very moment Akhabhagat's very sensitive soul experienced sudden conversion, as he lost his faith in all human relationship: Has my dearest 'sister' no confidence even in me who is prepared to do anything for her? If this is life, is it worth living in the context of the present worldly relationship? Why not renounce the world and seek the Divine Truth which will always abide? From this moment, he was down-tools and left his workshop and renounced the world and wrote his immortal philosophical poems.

These are the two greatest examples of sudden conversions which are indeed popular. Otherwise we find that most of the saints are usually born with a pious urge to pray at the shrine of God and to live a life of the simplest type, while rendering every possible humanitarian service. Thus even today thousands of pilgrims visit every year the shrine of *Sainbaba* in Maharashtra and *Jalabapa* in Saurashtra. Every month thousands of rupees are pouring in from various parts of India, Africa and other countries to these shrines with a view to earn the blessings of these departed saints. Bhakta Jalabapa was running his uncle's shop as a grocer at Virpur in Saurashtra; and although, he remained in the world for many years, he was never of it. He even instructed his young wife to follow an old ascetic, for waiting upon him in his last days during his pilgrimage. Such type of devotion is a rare phenomenon. Similarly the Gujarati Sufi poet Sagar was a restless soul in search of God from early days. He did not care for studies or service but went to the Himalayas at a tender age to practise penance. Apart from intervals of meditation he made a comparative study of the religions of the East and the West and evolved a sufistic philosophy of life which could express, in Gujarati poetry which is recited with fervour at many places, especia at his Ashram in Chitral near Baroda.

There are instances of Gujarati men affairs who carried on State business as min ters when on duty but dedicated themselves religious life when they were not on duty. holy life, in the midst of the temptations the world, has been a characteristic quality such pious scholars as *Anantaprasadji* of Ju gadh. One of the greatest statesmen in last century in India was *Gaurishanker Oza* Bhavnagar. He was an astute politician the maker of modern Bhavnagar but remained a great Vedantic scholar through his life and turned a *sanyasi* during the phase of his life.

When we turn to literature, we read sudden conversions. For example, in greatest poet of the world Shakespeare, we f sudden conversions in a bright comedy *As Y Like It*. Oliver the elder brother of Orlen has been a wicked person unworthy of a great achievement and yet, Shakespeare te us, that when he saw his brother, whom he maltreated, saving his life from a lion and serpent, there was a sudden conversion. turned into a perfect saint that very mome Shakespeare found him then even worthy the hand of Celia. In the same manner, Du Frederick was banished by his usur brother; but towards the end, that tyr comes into live contact with a saint and th is a sudden conversion with the result that falls at the feet of his elder brother and entre him back to his legitimate throne. Of cour such perpendicular conversions are very rare Shakespeare. Usually villains remain villa throughout their lives; only at some r moments, they reveal some flashes of the bri side of humanity, proving that they are without the milk of human kindness.

* * * *

As it was said at the birth centenary of S Saradadevi, the Holy Mother, there are hundred examples of Women Saints in b the East and the West. They have been se in the first instance, as the guardians of th

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amily faith. In their own limited sphere, hey have achieved a harmony of relationship, urturing their religious beliefs in the same imple unostentatious manner in which they herished their husbands and children.

The Holy Mother demonstrated the unity of nankind and man's religions in her own life. ollowing in the foot-steps of her great husband, she spent her life in search of Truth and elf-realisation of the Divine Spark within us.

Most of the saints of India follow the same attern, though the channels of approach are ifferent. Some follow the path immortalised n beautiful words by the poet Tennyson :

'Self-reverence, self-knowledge and self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.'

Others believe in devotional songs dedicated o Lord Krishna or their favourite God or oddess. For the moment, we are concerned vith the life of *Saint Mirabai*. Mirabai, who elonged to the sixteenth century was born in Rajasthan in a family which had rich religious eritage. It was her lot to be associated with he famous Royal House of Chitor, by way of marriage, at an early age. By temperament she was introvert and not fitted for the ways of the world. Her unconventional association with wandering Sadhus, roused a lot of opposition in the palace itself. As luck would have it, she became a young widow and had to drag on existence under her tyrannical brother-in-law. This prince Vikramsinhji tried various devices to poison Mirabai and liquidate her in various ways. Every time there was a miraculous escape from the jaws of death. The cumulative effects of this short period of unbearable sufferings was a sudden decision to leave the palace and Rajasthan for good and to spend the rest of her life in the single devotion of Lord Krishna at Vrindavan and Dwarka, where she finally experienced her spiritual reunion with the Lord! Mirabai wrote her religious and devotional lyrics in a language which was both old Gujarati and Rajasthani, because during that period, there were indeed very thin partitions between the two. And today her lyrics are as much a part and parcel of the devotional life of Gujarat as of Rajasthan.

The lives of women saints of Gujarat suffer from a peculiar handicap. Somehow we have never shown any special historical sense because we have never been careful in preserving historical records, documents, monuments etc. Most of the chronicles were left to the troubadours or *Bhāts* and *Chārans* or the wandering bards who were singing exaggerated stories to please their patrons, no doubt based on certain facts.

Most of women saints, as we learn from legends or stories, circulated from generation to generation, were of the type of *Gauribai*, the Nagar-lady of Dungerpur on the border of Gujarat near Rajasthan. The story is simple. Marriage at a very tender age of six or seven even when she was suffering from galling eye-trouble ; then widowhood within a few weeks of marriage. As re-marriage was out of question in an orthodox upperclass Hindu society, she led a life of sex-repression, religious worship and dedication to the service of the Lord, while following the highest austerity of Hindu homes.

Here, the sudden conversion is due to the stroke of fate depriving Gauribai of her husband at a very tender age. No doubt, there must be a deep religious tendency, otherwise it is difficult to reach a distinct type of sublimation of the soul, in the midst of unhealthy atmosphere of gross worldly affairs. By simple living, by constant religious worship and by live contact with saints she acquired sacred lore and spiritual vision. Her immaculate purity and wonderful devotion to Lord Krishna attracted many devotees including the Raja of her State. There were many temptations in the path of her spiritual progress. When she went on a holy pilgrimage, the Maharaja of Jaipur honoured her for her self-realisation of God. He offered her a palace and all amenities for her religious life, but she declined all offers with thanks and reached her

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destination of holy places such as Mathura, Gokul-Vrindavan and Kashi. Her life of fifty years reveals an undying faith in the omnipotence and benevolence of God Almighty. Her religious songs, mostly in Gujarati and some in Hindi, are sung and preserved by her followers with deep affection.

* * * *

What baffles the average Western mind today is this : Why do the saints in the East sit alone on the high hills or in deep caves and spend a life of quiet meditation for their personal salvation, when the entire humanity is suffering from all sorts of ills—poverty, ignorance, diseases and misery ? The Christian Faith believes in the humanitarian doctrine of selfless service to mankind. Many Christian Missions take their stand on vows of celibacy, poverty, obedience and service to mankind.

Shri Aurobindo, the Saint of Pondicherry, gives a different orientation to the ancient Indian ideal of a *Yogi.* He argues that the intense quiet contemplation of a *Yogi* is not for selfish purposes but for redeeming the wrongs of humanity and for releasing high spiritual forces for the salvation of the human race, step by step. Of course, some may not believe in this theory that even the Yogi of the highest order can help the good forces of the Universe to fight against the evil forces and ultimately preserve and purify the best which the world has achieved so far.

No doubt there is a new orientation given to the doctrine of individual salvation, *Moksha* or *Nirvana.* In many cases, we have to distinguish between saints who renounced the world and secure spiritual advancement in their quiet isolation and saints who live in the world and fight the ills of humanity in a spirit of detachment from the world, claiming for their wages a zero such as Dr Schwitzer. Both types of saints have known sudden conversions in the East and the West. In every age the ideals sometimes take new colours, but the essence remains the same. Saint Francis of Assisi in Europe and Mahatma Gandhi in India, in two different ages, were actuated by the same ideals of reducing the burden of the types of sufferings of the teeming millions of the world.

THE ROBBER SAINT

SWAMI PARAMATMANANDA

Born in the 8th century as the son of the commander of Chola king's armies, in the family of a warrior tribe, Neelan in his youth trained himself in the use of the sword and other weapons of warfare and in time succeeded to his father's post. He inherited the kingdom of Thirumangai in Tanjore district, and spent his youth in sense-enjoyments and in the company of young damsels skilled in music and dancing. Chancing one day to see a celestial nymph in human form, he fell madly in love with her and promised for the sake of marrying her to become a Vaishnava and vowed to feed 1,008 devotees of Vishnu daily for a year. This involved such enormous expenditure that in his despair he often resorted to plunder—the profession of his tribe—for fulfilling his noble vow. One day, while feeling the pinch for money he espied a newly-married couple decorated from head to foot with precious jewels sauntering along gaily at a distance, unaccompanied by others. The robber chief armed himself quickly and stood before them, threatening to use force if they would not voluntarily give away all their jewels. The couple meekly submitted and without any demur bundled up their jewels and placed them before him. When the bridegroom could not remove a ring from his toe in spite of his best efforts, Neelan removed it by the sh clench of his teeth. Neelan then attempting to w away with the bundle of his booty found to indignation that he could not lift up the bundle, so suspected that he must have fallen a victim the incantations of the bridegroom. Brandishing sword he demanded an answer to the query, what mantras have you made me spell bound The bridegroom, who was really God in the company of His Divine consort assuming mortal for for a special purpose, readily consented to tea him the mantra. Calling Neelan aside he whisper into his ears the sacred eight-lettered mantra Narayana, and revealing His divinity showered grace on him. Purified already by the touch of Divine Body, Neela, after receiving the man instantaneously attained Divine Illumination, composed moving hymns in Tamil radiating the p fume of Divine love and wisdom. Thus did king of Thirumangai become transformed by Divi grace into the Alwar (Prince of devotees) of Thi mangai. It was thus that he who came to rob G of all His jewels was robbed of his old impure and decked with the jewels of Divine Love Wisdom.

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KARNATAKA

C. K. PRABHU SHANKARA

Sri Purandara Dasa, a celebrated saint of Karnataka is hailed as the founder of Karnataka music. He has composed hundreds of songs in Kannada, some of them revealing his intimate relation with Lord Purandara Vittala. The vast majority of his songs are addressed to masses with the express intention of awakening their spiritual and moral consciousness and bringing about large scale social reformation. The saint-composer sings not from his head but from the depth of his heart which quiver throbs for his fellow beings.

He was not born a saint. On the contrary if anything of renunciation was mentioned about him his shock would have been greater than that of those who had known him intimately. But he was chosen by the Lord to propagate devotion, which was something alien to him. The Lord sought him though he did not seek the Lord consciously.

Sri Purandara Dasa's former name was Krishnappa Naik. He was born in Purandara Madha, a place near Pandarapura, in the latter half of the fifteenth century. He is said to be a brahmin by birth and a diamond merchant by profession. His father Varadappa Naik left him a rich legacy of wealth and reputation. Krishnappa Naik slaved hard to increase his riches to fabulous proportions. He soon earned, along with wealth, a reputation as a connoisseur in diamonds.

Strangely enough, soon greed and stinginess grew in Krishnappa Naik to monstrous proportions. He was overpowered by them. He was a banker too besides a business man and his love to collect simple and compound interests turned to a dangerous passion. He would move about clad in rags and eat just enough to keep life in the body! He would rather part with his life than see even a penny leaving him! He would moan with pain if ever a beggar by mistake thought he could get a cent from him! People naturally scorned and laughed at him. There was only one person who was feeling intensely for him and that was his devoted wife Lakshmi Bai. She was good natured, had great devotion to the Lord and was very generous. But she had nothing to give. Her husband's stinginess was a curse on her and she suffered it in silence. She was no doubt miserable but could find no way out.

Once on an auspicious occasion Krishnappa Naik was forced by convention to go to Bheema river for a dip. Custom demanded that he should perform worship and give a few coins to holy men. It was the hour of trial for Krishnappa Naik! He thought he would not survive the shock! Anyway he conducted a thorough search in his cash box and found a worn copper coin which had lost its form but had retained its name! He went to the farthest end of the bathing ghat which was hardly frequented by people. He and his wife had finished their dip and were about to return. But just then there appeared an old brahmin to beg! Krishnappa Naik was writhing with pain as he had to part with the coin. But something came to his mind as a flash. He slipped the coin to the river unnoticed, stamped his foot on it and then at the top of his voice announced that he had lost all he had brought! He staged a search but produced nothing. He wept in public. The brahmin left with a smile on his face. Lakshmi Bai's pain was too great to be expressed. Even on a rare holy occasion, her husband had exhibited such niggardliness that she hung her head in shame. Stinginess itself should have felt ashamed and accepted defeat at the hands of Krishnappa Naik!

Years passed and the Lord was biding His time. A very poor but impressive brahmin approached Krishnappa Naik with an appeal for financial help to perform his son's sacred-thread ceremony.

'What!' exclaimed Krishnappa Naik. 'What do you think I am? Made of gold? Son's thread ceremony! Tomorrow you will

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want to perform your father's ceremony! And the day after your mother's! As if I am responsible for all that! Get out from here.'

But he was no ordinary beggar. He described his poverty with such moving vividness that even Krishnappa Naik in an inadvertant moment said, 'Come tomorrow!' This was no less a miracle than the mountain melting!

He appeared again the next day. 'Come tomorrow,' was the reply. The brahmin was painfully obedient! He came again with unfailing but disconcerting regularity. Krishnappa Naik dodged the brahmin for six months with the hope that the other man would give up the affair. But no. The brahmin doggedly haunted the house and the shop of the stingy millionaire. At long last the merchant yielded. He opened his cash box and poured several coins into a heap. The brahmin rejoiced. But his happiness was short lived. For, they were old and worn out ones. Nor could he have the whole heap to himself. Krishnappa Naik said: 'Select one coin from this. Quick!' The brahmin's heart sank. He was completely out-humoured. He left with a deep sigh but no curses.

The brahmin hit upon a new plan. He perceived that the kitchen was the right gate to reach even the most unapproachable treasury. So he went to the housewife. She was conversant with the whole affair and was feeling greatly for this poor brahmin. When he — the manifestation of the entire misery of the whole earth — stood before her begging for a few coins she was made conscious of her own poverty. She said: 'O, revered brahmin, I am ashamed of myself. I know how badly in need of money you are but I have nothing to give. Everything in this household belongs to my husband. I am not authorised to give alms to any one.' 'But honourable lady,' interrupted the brahmin, 'you have that costly nose-ring shining. That is yours. For all I know you have brought it from your father's house.' The lady was happy and surprised at the same time. How could he know? Well, she was too glad to be of service to him. She at once parted with it. The brahmin thanked profusely and left the house with the la nose-ring.

And, alas, he went straight to Naik's s to sell it! His arrogance shocked the m chant. His surprise knew no bounds when recognised the ornament to be his wife's. brahmin deposited the sales proceedings Naik himself and left the place saying tha would withdraw the money at the time need. With another bewitching smile he appeared.

Naik kept the ornament under seal in safe and hurried home. He summoned wife and noticed her bare nose. He was be himself with anger. She was out to ruin hi Quivering with anger he demanded: 'W on earth have you done with your nose-rin

Lakshmi Bai fainted. She knew her would be taken out of her if only she that she had given it in alms to the brahm After a little while she said, just to save skin: 'It gave way. So I have removed kept it inside. It is to be repaired.'

Naik's doubts were cleared. She had d berately parted with it! And the beggar the audacity to bring it to him to conve into cash! Well he would see the end of

'Lakshmi!' he shouted, 'if you wan live, you bring it here at once.'

She ran in and bolted the kitchen door. had only one way out. That was to mi little poison and swallow. She prepared mixture at once and prayed to the Lord. said: 'O, Lord, I have done a good t in going to the rescue of a suffering brah But that has resulted in displeasing my band, who is also Lord. Now, let me offer being and life to You.'

So saying she was about to drink the poi But lo, there was a splash in the cup an her amazement she found the very ornam smiling at her from the bottom of the cup the midst of deep darkness there was inviting her! She took it out and saw that was the very nose-ring she had given a

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he was overwhelmed with joy, thanked the ord in sobs and ran back to give it to her usband.

Naik was pacing up and down the hall with eat impatience, all the while cursing his wife hom he considered to be the ruin of his amily. His greed and anger dictated him to ill her in case she came out without the pre-ous ornament. She returned — but with the rnament, quite contrary to his expectation. e was puzzled, his head reeled. Like one ho is mad he ran back to his shop, unlocked, nsealed the casket, only to find that the jewel had left there was not there any more.

Scales fell off Naik's eyes all at once. The ord had knocked at his door with unfailing gularity for full six months. The door that ad resisted with all its might broke open at ace displaying all the wealth and splendour oncealed so long. The chosen one responded. e submitted himself to the Divine Will.

The next dawn witnessed a miracle in Purandara Gadha. Countless people had thronged in front of Naik's house and were receiving alms from his untiring and unhesitating hands. Cash, jewels, clothes, corn — everything to the last farthing and particle — were given away as gift to all those that only came and asked. Stinginess had changed to generosity overnight.

Krishnappa Naik set on foot with his wife and children to Pandarapura, where he served the Lord for twelve fruitful years. There arose from Krishnappa Naik the niggard, Purandara Dasa, the servant of Lord Purandara Vittala. Later he received religious instructions from Vyasaraya, one of the greatest spiritual teachers of the age. Purandara Dasa spent the rest of his life in contemplation and propagation of devotion among thousands of his countrymen. He spoke to them in sweet music, captivated their hearts and showed them the Divine path. His songs have indeed immortalised him.

Sudden Conversion of Saints

KERALA

E. R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA

CHELAPPARAMBU NAMBUDIRI

There is an interesting tradition current in erala about the sudden conversion of Chelaparambu Nambudiri. Chelapparambu was ell-versed in vedic lore and was also a gifted oet. He, however, took pleasure in leading wanton and sensuous life. Admired for his rudition and brilliance, he could attract a umber of friends of both sexes.

Even when he was at the age of ninety helapparambu could not give up his passion or sensual pleasures. He had his residence t Guruvayur where the celebrated shrine of ri Krishna was situated. It was the time hen Melppattur Narayana Bhatta, seated at the feet of Lord Krishna, was composing the famous *Narayaniya*. One day, in the evening, Chelapparambu was on his way to sacred tank to have his oil-bath. Anointed with oil all over the body, supported by his two wives on both sides and wearing only a strip of loincloth, the aged man was passing by the shrine. Narayana Bhatta caught sight of him, and pitied him. In a tone expressive of contempt he exclaimed, 'O dear one, even at the age of ninety you can afford to forget that there is death!'

Chelapparambu stood still for a moment. Without a word he shook off both his wives attending on him, caught hold of the towel

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from the body of Narayana Bhatta, rubbed away the oil on his body and straightaway entered into the shrine and prostrated himself before the Lord with these words :

अब्दार्धेन हरिं प्रसन्नमकरोदौत्तानपादिः शिशुः
सप्ताहेन नृपः परीक्षिदबला यामार्धतः पिङ्गला ।
खट्वाङ्गो घटिकाद्वयेन नवतिप्रायोऽपि तन्न व्यथे
त्वां कारुण्यनिधिं प्रपद्य तरसा शेषायुषा तोषये ॥

'The son of Uttana-pada, even though a child, propitiated Lord Hari, in six months; the King Parikshit in seven days; Pingala, of the weaker sex, in one and a half hours; Khatvanga in less than an hour. Therefore, though aged four scores and ten I do not regret; taking refuge in Thee, the Ocean of Compassion, I devote the rest of my life to Thy worship.'

But fortunately there was no worldly life left to this unique devotee of the Lord. He was instantaneously taken to the Lord to the surprise of the worshippers assembled in the shrine including Narayana Bhatta.

KRISHNALILĀSUKA

Krishnalilasuka who afterwards bore the name Vilvamangala, was a native of North Parur in Central Kerala. He was a Nambudri Brahmin. He was well-versed in all branches of learning and was a gifted poet, as is evidenced by his celebrated work *Krishnakarnamrita.*

There is a fascinating tradition regarding the sudden change that occurred in the life of Krishnalilasuka. The young poet was in passionate love with a courtesan named Chintamani. Chintamani was reputed for her bodily beauty and artistic accomplishments. Krishnalilasuka was in such a fervour of love with her that he could not pass a day without seeing her.

It was a newmoon day. The young Nambudri had to perform the *Śrāddha* of his father. Absolute celibacy was to be maintained for the day. Though the lover could somehow pass the daytime without seeing his beloved became restless during the night as the thou of her haunted him. He could not get sl In the dead of night he resolved to go to C tamani. He had to walk a few miles and c a river to reach her house. Outside it heavily raining. But the young man supp ed by the burning love for the courtesan fast in the darkness till he reached the of the river. To his consolation, howeve found some loglike thing floating on the and making use of it he managed to r the other bank.

Coming to the house of the courtesan found the gate closed and bolted and no would hear him in the roaring sound of r After a long search, he could find someth like a rope hanging down the outer wall of house and by clinging to it he jumped c the wall and entered the house. He woke the courtesan who was surprised to see h She anxiously enquired how he could man to be there at that odd hour. He narr his adventure as a demonstration of his ar love for her.

The courtesan, however, was not convin by the story. She pointed out to him bloodstains which his hands and clothes b She told him that he had mistaken a snake for the piece of rope. Leading to bank of the river she showed how he had taken a corpse for the driftwood. Chintan then scolded her young lover for his though deed saying, 'After all you are risking life for the sake of my body which is lo some, the union with which will lead senses to utter destruction. You have for ten your noble birth and your high achi ments and have become blind for the sak this body. How worthy of you it would h been if you had at least a particle of this for the Lord?' These words of the court opened the eyes of the lover. He instant ously left home and became a saint.

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MAHARASHTRA

M. A. KARANDIKAR

Mahārāshtra is a land hallowed by saints since olden times since Mahārāshtra became the land of the Marathi speaking people. We know through Marathi sources of the names of saints beginning with the great saint Jnāneshwara right down to our own times. We have saints emphasizing Yoga practices, saints stressing mere 'Bhakti', or saints who have Bhakti crowning all effort as a superstructure on yogic preparations, or again based on great mental and moral achievements only. We find that the saints who have extolled the yogic preparation for emancipation have had probably a period of preparation and tranquil gradation to absolution. They had as it were, a beautiful continuity of fruitful effort in their march to salvation. But saints who were first and last the greatest exponents of mere Bhakti, seem to have passed from the period of the excruciating agony to the bliss of God-realization under great moral strain and their minds attained the exulting experience of divine presence and affection through some sudden events in their life. This cannot indeed be stated in a facile way as a general proposition, but the trend is quite obvious.

The first one among this category of saints whom we meet in Mahārāshtra is the great Nāmadeva, followed by tortured Kānhopātra, the pious Tukārāma, and the active Rāmadāsa. There are others too about whose sudden conversions we know, but about which full details are lacking. We therefore first turn to Nāmadeva.

NĀMADEVA

Nāmadeva was born in 1270 A.D. of a tailor named Dāmāsheta and Gonāi in Narsingpur. He led the very lawless life of a murderer, as the legend tells us, who killed 84 horsemen. While according to his usual custom he had gone to visit the temple of Āmradhyā Nāganātha he saw a woman rebuking her child. The child was crying because it had nothing to eat. When Nāmadeva asked her about it she told him that the child had become an orphan and she a widow when Nāmadeva killed her husband among the eightyfour horsemen.

Nāmadeva was touched to the quick; he went inside the temple, and in the fury of his repentence he cut his neck with a scythe bathing the Deity with his blood. He was turned out of the temple by the priests, and he straightaway thence proceeded to Pandharpur, now determined to lead a holy and a pious life. He became highly devoted to God Vitthala. There is a story that at Muktabāi's request Gorā began to test the ripening of the 'pots' (the saints) and found Nāmadeva an unbaked 'pot'. Nāmadeva later on became the disciple of Visoba Khechara (of Bārsī), who convinced him of the omnipresence of God. A story of Nāmadeva's great humanity and sense of the omnipresence of God is told when as a dog snatched a piece of bread from him, Nāmadeva ran after him with his pot of curds, imploring the dog to share the curds too. Nāmadeva's miracles are many: of the well in the desert beginning to bubble over with water in his North Indian pilgrimage, or his saving Pandharpur from floods. He is probably the greatest Kīrtana-performer in the Vārkarī tradition.

It seems that after a long life of spiritual happiness Nāmadeva expired in 1350 A.D. He was buried at the 'great door' of Vithobā's temple at Pandharpur and the place is known as Nāmadevāchī Pāyarī.

Nāmadeva repents of his sin. He has said in one place that people are unmindful of the fact that their bodily miseries are caused by the sins they have committed; with tears in his eyes and with outstretched hands, Nāmadeva looks out for his Lord. He thinks, in faith, of Him night and day. Wild fire of anxiety envelopes him and he wants God to

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take mercy on him. He wants God not to think of his sin—of which he is an ocean incarnate. Nāmadeva experienced mental anguish and heart-rending passion for attainment of God.-He went through what mystics are apt to describe as the 'Dark Night of the Soul'. But it was not probably as completely dark as it was in the case of a saint four centuries later, viz., Tukārāma. Nāmadeva, however, is more akin to Tukārāma than the Marathi saint Jnānadeva. Nāmadeva's mind clings to God like a bee setting its heart upon the fragrance of the flower or like the fly resorting to honey. Nāmadeva put full faith in God. His conviction regarding his sins made him firmer in his resolve to realize God. All his talents and energies, which were bent on sin, were now directed to make him a saint. He now pines for God and in a beautiful metaphor says: 'I am Thy young one while You are my bird; You are the deer, while I am Your cub'. He implores God to come to his succour like the mother who with an overpowered heart helps her child, or like the mother-deer helping its young one. He urges for Divine help and remembers former Divine assistance like that which was showered on the Demon Balī or the Divine favour that cooled God Shiva himself on his drinking the Hālāhala poison. He talks of fire having no sway over Prahlāda or Sītā in her fire-ordeal or Bibhīshana whose home was scared in the Lankā holocaust.

He is converted morally and spiritually. He talks of God's Name and God's Love. The regeneration has its effect on him. God's Grace descends on him. He gets convinced of God, serving saints. Nāmadeva then declares that those who have seen God lose all sense of false shame. He is filled with the joy of Unitive life and all his emotion, volition or intellect submit to God.

The change in Nāmadeva was sudden, even dramatic. His salvation was according to him due to his good fortune. He later on develops a full consciousness of dependence on God and in his utter surrender to God there are hardly few to equal him. He considered t faculty of God-realization to be a God-giv present. He asks: 'The Mogrā flower abi on the top of a creeper; who teaches it to fragrant? By the native faculty of G realization would one be able to realize Hi He forgets his hunger and thirst in the pl sure of God's name. He says: 'We h experienced joy a thousandfold of that in Divali Holidays'. He sees God's Light a thousand suns shining forth brilliantly. sees the Eagle in all the ten quarters. To h now there was neither the East nor We neither North nor South. Trumpets sou forth and manifold varieties of unstruck sou emerge. He has now neither sleep nor drea Nāmadeva tells us finally that he was G and God was himself.

KĀNHOPĀTRĀ

The second poetess we should consider Kānhopātrā. She was the most beauti daughter of Shyāmā, a courtesan of the pla Mangalavedhā. She wanted to marry who equalled her own beauty. We are t that she found this beauty in God Vitthala Pandharpur. The then king of Bidar— about A.D. 1468—sent for her on hearing her beauty. Rather than go to Bidar decided to lay down her life at Pandhar near the beautiful God whom she loved, it seems she died in 1468 A.D.

Kānhopātrā's 'abhangas':—Only a few them seem to be available to us. She subm to God, and says, 'I am truly an outcast, a I little know the rules of conduct; but I sur know how I should submit to you'. She full of anguish and asks, 'Why do you lift me up? I have once dedicated myself you. If I am now obliged to call mys another's, on whom would the blame rest? She implores God and finally when she s God she joyfully exults: 'Happy am I t I have seen Thy feet.' The very God Death, she is certain, would be terrified wh saints utter God's Name. Kānhopātrā s she wears the garland of God's Names.

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We can see how utter must have been the surrender of this God-loving woman, who in her distress has none else to go to and who therefore seeks spiritual love. The change in her mind was swift and sudden, and her demonstration regarding man's sensual nature shows how she must have been fed up. Kānhopātrā, though an outcast, is held in high esteem in Mahārāshtra and the songs composed by her are still sung with an experience of the same joy that she must have greatly experienced.

TUKĀRĀMA

The third great spiritual convert is Tukārāma, the saint from Dehu near Poona.

Tukārāma was born probably in 1598 A.D. according to Professor R. D. Ranade). He was born when the Marāthā country was already oppressed and torn under the rule of the Deccan Muslim rulers. He came of a comparatively wealthy family, as also his two wives. He had to experience great privation and distress in a famine (round about 1629 A.D., though famines were frequent enough then) and he suffered loss in trade; his first wife, Rakhumābaī and son Santu died for want of food. This seems to have accelerated his conversion. He was, earlier, married a second time too. In 1619 A.D. he was favoured by Bābājī Chaitanya by initiating him in a dream. Tukārāma was highly distressed by his material loss and began his arduous trek on the path of God-realization. He later met Rāmadāsa, who is credited as being the spiritual Guru of the Marathi king Shivājī—to whom Tukārāma had earlier directed him for spiritual and political advice. Having led an intensely spiritual life Tukārāma passed away in 1650 A.D.

Tukārāma in his piece of autobiography (Abhang 3935) says: 'I have known personally how a sinner could be saved. There could be no greater sinner than myself . . . God has really saved me'. Here in one and the same mood we see both repentance and faith of Tukārāma. Tukārāma had a family tradition of devotion to God Vitthala (Abhang 3939). He says in the same Abhang: 'I was merged in much sorrow in my worldly life. My mother and father died. My wealth was all expended and lost in a famine. I was disrespected. My wife died because there was no food to eat. I was ashamed and got disgusted with life . . . . My mind was not fixed on devotion originally . . . Now I did not allow my shame to creep into my mind. . . . I sat fasting at God's door' (Abhang 3939). Tukārāma determined to end his life since it was full of sin and he bid adieu to shame, forgetfulness and idleness (2774). He resolved to undergo all suffering renouncing family ties, wealth, even food (2084). The sense of transitoriness of this world overwhelmed him (248), infirmities of coming old age dampened him and the inevitability of death tortured him. He was now fully convinced that rescue could come only through God's Grace. He therefore proceeds to bind God with him in Divine Love—'Let my mind always rest on Thee, though my body may be where it likes,' he says (2430). He casts off all fear, even fear of God. He approaches and prays to Him in all humility. However Tukārāma was not so fortunate to win God's Grace at once. We find him now in the throes of God-realization. Abhangas 1475, 1257, 3257 and 2505 show this state of his mind. He now wavers in his darkness. He says—'What I demanded of Thee has been useless. My worry is still unsolved. I have no vision of Thee even in my dreams. . . . I have lost all courage. I think I am forsaken and alone' (2505). Extreme restlessness seizes him and he says, 'I pant without You (God) as a fish out of water' (2200). Further he says, 'My life is oozing out of my eyes' (1015). There was a continual introspection in him now. He says—'I am afraid on account of the darkness of the journey. All the quarters to me have become lonely and dreadful. Darkness prevents my march and I fall at tree-stumps and stems. . . . God is yet far away' (2504). Utter desolation shakes him, he becomes fully conscious of all his defects;

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torments of self-calumny assail him and there is no rest (2082). He feels that his sin stands between himself and God (1486). New sins attack him even in his surrender to God (2759). He wants to reason out why God does not show him His Grace and he implores the saints to intercede for him (1539). Upto now Tukārāma believed that God would help him. But there was no divine response. He began to pass through the state of indifference, but he had not to stay long there, though he questioned God's omnipotence (1485, 1279, 1923). There are many verses showing this condition of Tukārāma's mind. Now however God does not wait. Tukārāma's heart-rending agony is at last heard by God. The darkness was suddenly illumined by flashes of Divine Vision. There was a sudden relief and great delight. Tukārāma says, 'As I look at Him all my mental agony disappears. Bliss is now leading me even to a higher bliss' (1329). He says — 'Blessed am I, my exertion has become successful. I have attained the desired end. . . . My mind is composed. My body is changed; on it has fallen the Light of God' (4060). That is how Tukārāma was suddenly converted, and his mystic experiences point out to his having been a photic and an andile mystic. Tukārāma now turns for dispensing kindness and talking of divine Grace to people (850). He says, 'To advance religion and to destroy atheism is my business now' (1445). He wants in his minion to carry all to the Other shore (221). Tukārāma continued in God's Grace till his end.

RĀMADĀSA

We now come to one more of the Marathi saints, viz. Rāmadāsa. Rāmadāsa was born on Chaitra Śuddha Navamī in 1608 A.D. In 1620 he ran away from his house as he was unable to get initiation, we are told. He practised severe religious austerity for 12 years — and it seems before 1632 A.D. he got his initiation in a Vision direct from Rāma Himself. He settled in 1644 A.D. on the banks of the Krishnā river after a twelve years' sojourn on religious visits all over Ind Shivaji, we are told in the Vākenishi Pra rana (a historical document), was initiated Rāmadāsa in A.D. 1649. He seems to h gone to Pandharpur and in 1649 met Tu rāma also. We are told that Shivaji offe his whole kingdom to him in A.D. 1655. two met several times later on. Shivaji d in 1680 A.D., and his son Sambhaji s Shivaji's spiritual Guru and lived in his co pany for eight days. Rāmadāsa passed a in 1681 A.D. on Māgha Vadya Navamī. Rā dāsa had been a voluminous writer and seve of his books are extant. He was a strict d ciplinarian and brooked no defiance of ord He left many 'maths' and disciples. Dāsabodha is his *magnum opus*. He is intensive and piercing in his style and e today his lines leave a deep impression on reader.

Evanescence of the world seems to h early made a deep impression on Rāmadāsa the troublous times in history in which lived; he has referred to this in his Dāsabo (III. 10. 39-63). The thought of mis at one's death is turned to good in one's Divine quest. Rāmadāsa has very graphic description of the power Death in III. 9. 4-59 and XVII. 6. 26 in his Dāsabodha. Man is 'Bound' acco ing to him (V. 7. 37-44) and the Gne is the key to spiritual experience (VII. 2. 19). He has a long discussion on who sho be a Guru; he discusses who are good sa who can confer the vision of God on discip On the qualities of good disciples he has ex tiated in V. 3. 19-51. He believed in instantaneous liberation of an aspirant by G grace (VIII. 6. 41-50) like unto the Bha vadgītā. For this purpose God's name sho be constantly repeated, one should meditate God and ultimately disinterested devo alone could win God's love (X. 7. 19-2 He fully describes false and true medita in the famous 14th Dashaka (division) of book. Sādhana was to him necessary at stages; it has to be continuous.

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Rāmadāsa must have experienced the contradictions of spiritual experience and he has given expression to it in VII. 7. 19-23. Rāmadāsa's Karunāstakas are the quintessence of his own experience as an aspirant, and they point out how his conversion was sudden and not quiet. His vision of God occurs in VII. 4 of his Dāsabodha.

Here we conclude an account of the sudden conversion of saints in Mahārāshtra. Their life and history shows us their repentance and faith, their absolution and vision of God and their joy of conversion and blaze of spiritual illumination. Most of these saints realized God in their youthful days, even Tukārāma was young enough. We can say that most of them grew up in a divine atmosphere and must have imbibed spiritual good with the beginnings of their conscious experience, rendering a continuity in spiritual effort. The creative effort of religious awakening must have coincided with the growth of their religious consciousness while young. Their experiences are not uniform, but tend to a uniformity and therein lies the truth of all mystic experience.

Sudden Conversion of Saints

ORISSA

GOURIKUMAR BRAHMA

Orissa is proverbially known as a land of saints and 'Sanyasis'. Numerous are the 'maths' and various types of religious institutions that we find even today in towns and villages in Orissa. Towns like Puri, the celebrated seat of Lord Jagannatha, the presiding deity of Orissa, may be described as 'India in miniature' mainly from the standpoints of religious institutions and Indian philosophy. It is known from Indian History that most of the famous religious preachers visited Orissa, particularly, Puri or the Puranic Shrikshetra and established 'maths' or religious missions with a view to popularising the philosophies they expounded or preached. This was a perennial source of inspiration to many people, some of whom embraced new religious faiths most unhesitatingly.

Unfortunately, no systematic attempt has yet been made to compile the biographies of saints who threw aside all materialistic ideologies and mundane considerations and became saints. In most of such cases, the sudden association of a person with a saint or a devotee endowed either with some divine power or charming personality due mainly to spiritual inspiration, brought about the conversion. It should not be misunderstood that a saint is not a person who puts on the robes of a mendicant; he is a man whose eyes are ever fixed on the 'all-pervading one' to whom this world owes its existence. A saint feels more than the others that the ultimate reality in the world is spiritual and divine rather than materialistic and human. His philosophy of life is based on the consideration that sublunary possessions are transitory and that real happiness lies not in material satiation but in spiritual glorification. Hence, despite the several differences that we may notice among the various religious cults and creeds, there is something common to all saints. They are religious-minded not merely in the intellectual sense of the term but in the more spiritual and practical sense. Whatever might be the name by which the supreme deity of their worship is known (i.e., Brahman or Siva or Vishnu or Hari or Ram or any other name) they do not differ fundamentally in their social purpose, in their mission of human service. Religiosity to the saints does not consist of a set of high-sounding principles merely to be interpreted and explained to the others for their understanding and guidance; on the other hand, it

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is the very basis and life-force of an individual's existence, of his 'thinking, saying and doing'. It is really very interesting to establish intellectual association with such noble human beings whose biographical accounts inspire us, ennoble us and elevate us in the spiritual plane with their devotional intensity and emotional fervour.

SĀRALĀ DĀSA

Sāralā Dāsa, the author of the Mahābhārata in Oriya is popularly known as the 'Sudra-muni', which signifies that he was a 'sudra' by caste but he could raise himself to the exalted position of a 'muni' or a saint. He flourished in the middle of the 15th century. He is regarded as the 'Adi-kavi' or the first great poet in Oriya literature on account of his having composed a voluminous Mahākāvya (in eighteen books on the theme of the Mahābharata in Sanskrit) the like of which was never composed by his predecessors.

Sāralā Dāsa was born in a cultivator's family and his parental name was Siddheswara Paridā. He was in his childhood very much unmindful of his studies and his distaste for learning was a constant source of mental disquietness to his father who had a rich lore of Puranic stories. His memory-power was too short to retain in his mind the stories narrated by his father. It could not be dreamt that Siddheswara could suddenly be converted into a saint with wonderful powers of poetic inspiration and catholicity of religious outlook, characteristic of saints of the highest order. According to tradition Sarala Dasa used to go to cultivate the fields with his father. One day, when he was tilling the soil, a very old woman suddenly appeared behind him and requested him to help her to cross the river that was in close vicinity. When they were crossing the river, the level of water in the river rose higher to his great alarm. Apprehending danger to the old woman, Siddheswara raised her up and made her sit on his shoulders. In this state of bewilderment, the woman asked him to sing a song and make himself free of the anxiety caused by the swelling of the river, to which the culti replied that he had received no education, therefore, it was not possible for him to co with her request. Thereafter, the woman that by her grace, he would be able to dis great poetic talent and that he should b to compose the Mahabharata in his mo tongue.

The old woman of the story, as trad records it, was Goddess Sāralā (=Śāradā Goddess of learning) in disguise. The te of Goddess Sāralā stands even today at same place, attracting thousands of pilg every year and people of Orissa believe today that the Goddess is a 'Pratyaksha d (meaning, the desires of the devotees readily fulfilled). This was the turning p in the life of Siddheswara, who called hi a dāsa (servant) of Goddess Sāralā, henceforward, he came to be known as Sā Dāsa.

From that day onwards the saint in Sā Dāsa found expression in his thoughts deeds. He built a little hut or rather 'asram' on the bank of the river and b to compose his Mahabharata in Oriya. saintly life which set an example for m attracted visitors and pilgrims from all p of the country. Sāralā Dāsa is an exampl religious magnanimity and the deepest re for all religious faiths. He believed in supreme harmony of all religious cults creeds though he was himself a Śākta, God 'Sāralā Chandi' being his most adored d

Sāralā Dāsa toured extensively in O with the sole object of visiting all centre pilgrimage. There are numerous instance his Mahabharata of his devotional inte and spiritual as well as philosophical tr cendentalism which may be convenie quoted on several occasions in our day-to- life. His 'Vilankā Rāmāyana' and 'Cha purāna', as the names indicate, advocate cause of righteousness, the destruction of evil and the attainment of social peace spiritual bliss through divine grace and elevation.

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ACHYUTĀNANDA DĀSA

Chaitanya Deva, the most celebrated preacher of Vaishnavism in the 16th century visited Orissa in 1510 A.D. Pratāparudra Deva, the then king of Orissa, became his disciple. Thus, the Chaitanya movement gained tremendous momentum due to royal patronage. It is known from literary sources in the Oriya language that Chaitanya Deva was encircled as it were by five of the most important poets, devotees and preachers of Orissa of the 16th century. They are popularly known as the 'Pancha Sakha' (Pancha = Five, Sakha = friend) or the five friends of Shri Chaitanya. Achyutānanda Dāsa was one of the famous 'five friends' of Shri Chaitanya.

It is known from the biographical accounts of Achyutananda that when he was a young boy, he had been to Puri (Śri Khetra) with his parents. He was the only son of his parents who suffered the pangs of severe social criticism for their having not been blessed with a son prior to his birth. He was a very naughty boy and was very disobedient in his childhood. Gradually, when he crossed the adolescent stage, some change in his attitude and outlook could be clearly marked. During his visit to Puri, he got an opportunity to see Shri Chaitanya who was slowly moving with his party of 'Kirtana' along the mainroad. To the surprise of all, the moment this young boy could get a view of the divine personality of Shri Chaitanya, he felt enraptured and fell to his feet in the most profound devotion. It is said that no sooner did he touch the lotus feet of Shri Chaitanya with his hands than he experienced within himself a certain force of celestial inspiration which ultimately culminated in the manifestation of wonderful powers in him. Thereafter, he led the life of a saint and was respected as a highly religious man vested with superhuman powers. Even though more than four centuries have passed since the days of Achyutananda, still his reputation has remained undimmed and untarnished.

Achyutananda is believed by his followers to be an incarnation of Gopal (Shri Krishna). He is also known as the 'Gopal Guru' which is indicative of the fact that he was the preceptor of the Gopals (or those who tame cattle or herds of cows). His name is integrally associated with the 'Nimānanda Sampradāya' of which he was the most celebrated Guru. He has advocated the importance of 'Hare Rāma' mantra (as contradistinguished from the 'Hare Krishna' mantra) as the most potential instrumentality for the spiritual elevation of man in the Kali yuga. The religious cult that he established and the philosophy that he preached were no doubt inspired by the preachings of Shri Chaitanya and the vedantic interpretations of Madhva but as he was a master of yogic practices he has attempted to incorporate certain yogic principles also in his school of philosophy.

He is the author of many works prominent among them being 'Sunya Samhitā', 'Guru Bhakti Gitā', 'Garuda Gitā' and 'Harivamsa'. The last-named work is not a translation of the famous Harivamsa in Sanskrit. It is written in the Puranic style and is divided into seven books of considerable length. Achyutananda is remembered even today as a great yogi who devoted his whole life to the preaching of his own philosophical speculations conducive to social upliftment and human prosperity.

ARAKSHITA DĀSA

Arakshita Dāsa was born in the royal family of Bada Khemandi estate in Orissa in the third quarter of the 18th century. His parental name was Vasudeva but after he became a Sanyasi, he came to be known as Arakshita Dāsa. He has been called the 'Utkal Buddha' which makes it clear that though born with a silver spoon in his mouth and brought up amidst plenty and prosperity, still he renounced the world and became a mendicant. When he was in his teens, his contemplative mind was much agitated to see the distressed condition of the people around

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him, whereafter he resolved to set himself to meditation and devotional practices. His famous work, the 'Mahimandala Gita' presents not merely an account of his painful wanderings and his travels full of horrible experiences but also throws a flood of light on his philosophical theory which may be described as a yogic way of the worship of the Brahman. After wandering for long eighteen years, he founded a small monastery on the summit of a hill, 'Olāsuni' by name in the district of Cuttack, to which numerous disciples flocked for religious instruction and theosophical enlightenment.

BHIMA BHOI

Bhima Bhoi was born in Kondha (a scheduled tribe of Orissa) family in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century. When he was only four years old, he saw one day a Yogiputra (literally, son of a Yogi but here it means a young disciple of a religious creed called Nāthism) who had on his body marks of divinity, shouting for food in the street. From that day onwards the young boy developed within himself a deep desire for a keen scrutiny of the hard realities of life. His social environment was a constant source of inducement for concentration on the analysis of the real conditions of life which gradually made him feel detached from the world around him. In course of time, several supernatural incidents brought about a complete transformation of his attitude towards life. It is known from tradition that Mahimā Goswāmi (the founder of the faith?) and his disciple Govinda went to Bhima's house at midnight and initiated him into the Mahimā Dharma. Bhima was charmed with the supernatural power of the Goswami through whose grace he could see things with his own eyes for some time though he was blind from childhood and embraced the new faith without the slightest hesitation.

Thereafter, he composed numerous poems to popularise his religious tenets which constitute the basis of the Mahima Dharma or Alekha Dharma. His 'Brahma Nirūpana Gītā' and 'Stuti Chintāmani' are important contributions to religious literature in the Oriya language inasmuch as they depict not merely the Mahima Dharma but also trace the various cross-currents of religious thought in Orissa in the 19th century. Bhima Bhoi is a unique example of a religious preceptor, who though born in a low-caste family, could ascend the heights of glory by his tireless zeal. Like Janaka Maharshi, he led the life of a saint, though he had one foot firmly placed in domestic life.

A RUFFIAN TURNS A DEVOTEE

There is an interesting anecdote of a ruffian turning into a devotee of God through his contact with Sri Ramakrishna. The man was Manmath, an expert wrestler and noted ruffian of Baghbazar, Calcutta. The transformation happened like this, describes Swami Akhandananda in his *Memoirs of Sri Ramakrishna*: 'Yogin Ma, the great woman devotee, had a brother, Hiralal, who objected to his sister's visiting Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. So on the occasion when she invited the Master to her house for the first time and I accompanied him there, her brother asked Manmath to be there in order to frighten Sri Ramakrishna away. But Manmath, after seeing the Master and hearing a few of his words, fell flat at the Master's feet and wept, saying, "My Lord, I am very guilty. Please forgive me." The Master told him to come to Dakshineswar. I knew Manmath very well indeed, and he asked me, "Do take me to him—he has graciously invited me to go there." So a day was fixed and we both set off together in a coach with a pot of sweets. The Master treated him very kindly.....He took us to the Kali temple, and while circumambulating blessed him in a solitary corner and asked him to visit him on another Sunday. Once again I went with Manmath to see the Master—they met only three times in all.'

After a few years Swami Akhandananda met him again, and recorded his impressions about Manmath: 'His body was emaciated by penances and he had no outward consciousness. The sight of Manmath's God-mad state moved me exceedingly. My astonishment knew no bounds as I felt the transforming power of the Master's divine contact. That day I realized that what is not gained by austere penances in the mountains and forests is attainable easily at home through the Master's grace.'

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SINDH

G. N. MATHRANI

Saintliness, a challenge to Science :

A comprehensive study of the biographical accounts of the saints of any place and time would suggest that generally there are two types of saints, (1) those who are saintly in character and conduct right from their early childhood, and (2) those who become saintly later on. Their conduct and character in the early part of their life may be either ordinary or unusually vicious. *Both the types of saints are, in a sense, a challenge to the laws of Science.* Biology and Sociology are the two sciences which claim to explain character. Psychology as a science, does not give any new and original explanation of character ; its explanation of character is either in terms of the biological theory or in terms of the sociological theory or it combines the two views. Biology bases character on heredity, Sociology bases character on environmental influence. The character of both the aforesaid types of saints cannot be traced either to the power of heredity or to the power of environment, for every saint is uniquely different from his family and his natural and social surroundings.

Religio-psychological accounts of sudden conversions :

According to many of the Christian religious thinkers, saintliness in any man arises as a result of the Divine grace. The Hindu religious thinkers, on the other hand, emphasise the power of effort or sadhana ; the divine grace, according to them, operates only to awaken and put into activity the individual's own sanskaras or dispositions acquired by him, by his own efforts, in his previous birth. According to this view, Prince Goutama (who later on became Lord Buddha) responded to the sights of old age, disease, death and holiness due to the power of his previous births' sanskaras which were temporarily overpowered by his family heredity and sensual surroundings deliberately created by his father. Swami Vivekananda has rightly said that Buddha and Christ could not have been produced in one life. 'Such a gigantic will as that of a Buddha or a Jesus could not be obtained in one life, for we know who their fathers were. It cannot be solved by the theory of heredity. Gigantic will which Buddha and Jesus threw over the world, whence did it come ? Whence came this accumulation of power ? It must have been there through ages and ages, continually growing bigger and bigger, until it burst on society in a Buddha or a Jesus, even rolling down to the present day.' (From Swami Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga*).

Thus according to the Hindu standpoint, sudden conversion does not imply anything more than a temporary break in the continuity of the individual's spiritual and moral effort, followed by a sudden reawakening of the previous births' spiritual and moral dispositions.

William James, a well known American psychologist, attempts to explain the cases of sudden conversion as instances of what he calls 'incubation'. According to the incubation theory, an unconscious desire for conversion already resides in the deeper regions of the mind of the individual concerned and when that unconscious desire acquires sufficient strength, it bursts out in the form of conversion, appearing as a consequence of some trivial relevant incident.

The incubation theory of William James is not a false explanation of sudden conversion, but it is an incomplete explanation. The unconscious desire for conversion, postulated by William James, requires to be explained. What could be its genesis ? The Hindu theory stated above supplies a suitable answer to this question. The source of the unconscious desire for conversion, in the cases of sudden conversion, is the individual's previous births' sanskaras of which he has lost the knowledge and memory.

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In this article we shall give a biographical account of two saints of Sindh, whose spiritual life could be adequately interpreted in terms of the above-mentioned theory.

SAINT VILAYATRAI

Saint Vilayatrai was born in 1825, in old Hālan, a small village, situated in the southern part of Sindh. His father's name was Munshi Pratab Rai. At the school he proved to be a child of superior intelligence and sharp understanding. Besides his handwriting was considered to be very beautiful and also he was known to possess a gift for essay writing. Under the guidance of his Muslim teachers, he attained a good mastery of Arabic, Sindhi and Persian languages. He left the school after passing the fifth standard and soon after that he was made to marry, which he did not-unwillingly. After marriage, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, he was appointed as a village head-man in the central part of Sindh. After a few years of service, he was accused of some legal irregularities for which he was tried and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

In the jail, a very strange incident took place, which changed him altogether. One night, while in sleep, he saw Sri Guru Nanak Dev waking him up with his hands and telling him 'Why have you forgotten your identity? Remember that in your previous birth you were a great yogi, residing at a place near Multan. You had three brothers and all the four of you practised austerities and Bhakti Sadhana. But you all died before attaining your spiritual goal. You are all reborn in Sindh. Wake up, complete your unfinished task and also search for your brothers to guide them to the goal'.

After Vilayat Rai woke up from that dream, he felt within himself a very strange kind of peace and bliss which he had never experienced before. Through that experience the memories of the previous birth came back to him and his old spiritual habits and tendencies began to reassert themselves. Consequently he became a changed man and began to s every available bit of time in deep conte tion of God.

It also happened that a further inquiry held and the charges against him, for w he was sent to jail, were disproved and he released. But Vilayat Rai had already re ed the level of mystic consciousness an such he felt no difference between a pris and a free man. He therefore would not ac the release order; however he was prev upon to leave the premises of the jail.

When he came out of the prison, his sa ness became an established fact. On b released he went to his father's house, w for full two months, he remained in the of divine love and contemplation. All while he used to be lying down, unaware o world around him. Though he had atta the spiritual illumination and reached a high level of moral perfection, the though renouncing the world and breaking off family and other social ties did not enter mind. After two months of mystic com nion with the Divine, he left his home to travel about in order to search for a and also to search for his previous birth's thers. Soon he secured a Government job also discovered two of his brothers.

Many strange stories of miraculous po are recorded about Saint Vilayat Rai. Vil Rai could heal the sick, could revive the d could drive out ghosts and above all he c transform wicked and sinful men into g and virtuous men. *He exercised his mir lous powers* not by reciting any divine m tras, not even by touching, but *merely looking at the person concerned.* His met of giving Guru mantra also was very stra The moment he whispered a divine name a person's ear, the person concerned would down unconscious and in that state of un sciousness would go on 'mentally repeati the mantram given to him, but his ton would emit only a meaningless mono-syll 'Hoo'. In this way Vilayat Rai used impart, along with a divine name, the po

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meditate on the name. Sometimes a number his initiated disciples would gather at one nd the same place and time and by the power his presence fall into the state of unconiousness in which each one would mentally editate on his respective mantram, but outardly they would all emit the same sound Hoo '.

Some instances of the miracles of Saint Vilayat Rai

(1) Once an old man (a cousin brother his) entered his room, with a dead child his arms. His only son, born to him in vanced age, was now lying dead in his arms. he old man was shedding profuse tears of rrow and in that state of helplessness he uched the feet of Saint Vilayat Rai and kept e dead child near the saint's feet. The saint t up, embraced his cousin brother and said, Brother! It was God's will. It is no use itating your mind. Nothing can be done ow '. The old man replied with tears in s eyes, 'You are a saint and saints can alter en the will of God '. Vilayat Rai then very umbly said, 'Brother! I do not possess the ower to revive the dead; but if you have ith in the mercy of God, go and throw your ead child before Granth Sahib (the Sikh ripture which is considered, by the followers Sikhism, as the living embodiment of Sri uru Nanak) and sincerely pray to the all erciful God who is the refuge of all. The ld man understood that the saint would help im in that way. He took the dead child side the saint's house, threw it before Granth ahib and, with tears falling from his closed yes, he sincerely prayed to the Almighty. Vhen he opened his eyes, he found life in his hild's body and thereupon he uttered the folwing words of gratitude: 'Great is Guru Nanak, great is saint Vilayat and great is the ontroller of the world '. The old man went n repeating these words of gratitude till the hild began to move his limbs and then he icked up his child and took him home.

(2) One gentleman, named Bhai Keshavdas, f Hyderabad, Sindh, a disciple of Sufi Dalpat Rai, had gone for a visit to old Hālan and saint Vilayat Rai also was in Hālan at that time. One day Bhai Keshavdas informed saint Vilayat Rai that the former's father, Bhai Hariram, had been ailing for a long time and that many medicines had been tried, but to no effect. Bhai Keshavdas added that if the saint were to show his mercy, his father would regain his health. Vilayat Rai replied, 'I am a petty Government servant, I am not a fakir, nor a saint, nor even a physician. You better seek the help of a fakir '. Thereupon Keshavdas uttered the following words with great faith and sincerity, 'Sir, at the moment, I do not find any true fakir except your good self who could be of help to me '. Responding to his entreaties, saint Vilayat Rai suggested that Bhai Keshavdas should take a sanctified black thread from the fakir sitting outside the former's house and put it round his father's neck and added that by God's grace results would be favourable. Accordingly Bhai Keshavdas went outside where he saw a fakir sitting, took a black thread from him, went home and put it round his father's neck, remembering the holy name of Vilayat Rai. Immediately there was a beneficial change in the patient's condition and in a few days' time Bhai Hariram, who was given up as lost, regained his former health. When Bhai Keshavdas related all the details of the event to his father, the latter expressed that it was a miracle performed by saint Vilayat Rai who, as it was his habit, did not like to reveal his powers.

(3) Saint Vilayat Rai cured many persons of their sinful and wicked nature, but his greatest miracle of this type was his act of transforming (instantaneously) a Police Jamadar of licentious nature, named Jivat Singh of Kambar, who later on became a great saint. We shall describe the sudden conversion of Jivat Singh in this article.

Finally in 1887, saint Vilayat Rai passed away, by the act of his own will, on the day (15th January) and at the time (4 a.m.) previously fixed by himself.

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SAINT JIVAT SINGH

Jivat Singh was born in the year 1831 A.D., in the family of a rich zamindar of Kambar, a small village in Larkana district. As a small boy, Jivat was very handsome and intelligent and for that reason he was fondled by all his family elders and school teachers. Possibly it was this fondling and pampering which, later during his youth, made him ease loving and fond of sense pleasure. After a few years of school education, when he grew up to be a tall, healthy and strongly built young man, he got married to a lovable, but not a very humble and submissive, girl from a respectable family of Diwan Lakha Singh of Larkana town.

After marriage Jivat Singh thought of obtaining an employment in some Government department. Strangely enough he went and became a Police Jamadar or possibly a Sub-Inspector in his own village. His family elders did not approve of it at all, but it was his childhood's ambition to become a policeman. As a little boy, he admired the policeman's dress and the policemen's methods of asserting themselves over and threatening the private citizens. As a police officer and as a rich zamindar's son, Jivat Singh had plenty of money and power to enjoy all the pleasures of life.

He had a very strong will power and he knew that he could achieve whatever he willed. This led him to think that if he learnt Magic he would be able to exercise his will power over others more effectively. Somehow he managed to procure some old books on magic, read them and acquired the knowledge of some effective magical rites.

His greatest weakness was excessive sexual passion and a craving to seduce every healthy and good looking girl that he came across. To satisfy his erotic cravings he employed all means and ways, including the method of magic. He proved to be a source of danger to all decent people in the village and round about. Any woman, who did not submit to his will, would be subjected to very humiliating situations created by him through his formance of the magical rites. Nobody co take any steps against him, because he a police officer and a rich zamindar, and would not listen to his mother's, brother's wife's exhortations.

Jivat Singh continued to indulge in the described sinful life till his 34th year. Vilayat Rai, in his search for his pre birth's brothers, discovered one in Lar and he was Diwan Chandumal, Pleader, of whose grandsons is at present a very known citizen of Bombay city, i.e. D Nanikram Motwani of the famous Chi Radio. According to saint Vilayat Rai's i tive apprehension, Jivat Singh also was his vious birth's yogi brother. We shall now cribe the sudden and dramatic transform of Jivat Singh.

For some time saint Vilayat Rai serve the Revenue department, at Kambar, the lage of Jivat Singh. Soon after Vilayat landed in Kambar, the village-folks cam know of his saintliness and miraculous po Munshi Shamdas, the elder brother of Singh, along with many other elderly me Kambar, became an admirer and a devote saint Vilayat Rai.

After a few days of close and int contact with saint Vilayat Rai, when M Shamdas felt sure that Vilayat Rai w perfect sage and a man of highest spi realisations, he very humbly requested to latter as follows. 'Sir, I have a younger ther who does not care for God, nor ca discriminate between good and bad, bet virtue and vice. Day and night he is eng in the pursuit of sensual pleasures. Frequ he commits sexual crimes and other irregu ties. He knows some magic also and wi magic power he harasses the decent and pectable women of the village. Everybo afraid of him. He is a veritable terror i village. We do not know how to bring to the right path. You have now fortun come to our village, you kindly show power of grace and transform him'. T

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on saint Vilayat Rai said, 'Bhai Shamdas, u bring Jivat here, let me study his condi- n and then God will do the needful'.

Accordingly Munshi Shamdas approached vat Singh and suggested that he should meet int Vilayat Rai. Jivat's first reaction was refusal. Then he was told that Vilayat Rai aimed to be a greater magician than Jivat ngh and that he was willing to impart his owledge of magic to Jivat Singh. This mpted Jivat and he accompanied his elder other to call on saint Vilayat Rai. When vat saw the saint, he stood at some distance d very proudly asked the saint to display his agic so that he (Jivat) could form his opi- on about the saint's knowledge of magic. int replied to Jivat, 'Why are you standing far away? Come near to me and I shall ow you my magic'. Jivat moved towards saint and stood close to him. The saint sed his eyes and looked fixedly for a moment Jivat's face. The saint recognised him to his previous birth's brother and immediately his mystic powers awakened the forgotten emories of the previous birth, in the deeper yers of Jivat's mind. While the saint was oking into Jivat's eyes, Jivat fell down uncon- ious. He remained unconscious for two ours. When he regained some consciousness, got up and prostrated before the saint, with n expression of utter humility on his face nd uttered the words, 'Oh Jivat, Oh Jivat, hat did you do? You wasted your whole fe'. Then he began to run away, but they ed him and kept him near the saint who went n looking at him. After some time Jivat ecame quiet and fully conscious, then he was ntied. After a little while, Jivat very soberly aid to the saint, 'Sir, I have understood. Now am not that old Jivat, I am a changed man. ow I am your obedient slave and shall ever emain under your guidance only. Kindly for- ive me for going astray. It will not happen again. *Your look has purified me and saved me*'.

After that day's incident, during the course of one year, time and again, Jivat Singh was tormented by the inner storms of moral repentance and in agony used to utter the same words, 'Oh Jivat, Oh Jivat, what did you do? You wasted your whole life'. On such occasions he would lose his body consciousness and start running aimlessly. Possibly his physical act of running on such occasions was an external expression of his inner struggle to escape from the pain of the sins committed by him. For one full year Jivat bore an expression of deep sadness on his face.

When it was reported to saint Vilayat Rai that Jivat was tending to be melancholic, he replied that in due course he would come out of his melancholic state and become a great and powerful saint; that he would spend the rest of his life in the contemplation of God and the service of man. After one year of inner purgation, Jivat began to spend his time constantly in the company of saint Vilayat Rai under whose guidance he went through spiritual disciplines. One of the disciplines practised by him was the selfless and egoless, and at the same time affectionate, service of his Guru Vilayat Rai. He became as egoless as formerly he was egotistic and vain; and his former excessive sexual passion for women was replaced by an ecstatic love of God. In his ecstatic moods he used to compose songs and verses in Sindhi, which have been preserved and published by his disciples. Gradually Vilayat Rai transferred his miraculous powers to Jivat Singh, which the latter exercised in the name of his Guru, to alleviate the sorrows of men.

Saint Jivat Singh also, like his Guru, died by the power of his own will, on 15th January 1899, at 4 a.m., exactly 12 years after his Guru's death.

Mystical phenomena are a necessary accompaniment of mystical life. But what constitutes the essence of mystic realisation is not these mystical phenomena themselves, but an unfaltering, unending love of God.

(R. D. Ranade: *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, Preface, p. 21.)

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TAMILNAD

SWAMI PARAMATMANANDA

The human mind, despite the apparent supposed intelligibility to the individual possessor, is mostly shrouded in mystery. That part of it which bears the name of the conscious mind forms but the thin outer crust concealing the main layers lying within, far more significant and potent, though unexplored, unobserved and even unimagined. Beneath the conscious mind is the sub-conscious region of the mind, which is a wonder to thinkers; and more mysterious is the enigma of the unconscious, which like an ice-berg with its major portion submerged often proves to be the undreamt-of cause of the wreck of full many a proud and promising ship of life. None but the man who has practised regular prolonged meditation knows what terrors await him when he dives deep into his own mind. No wonder then, that the poet Wordsworth, who is wont to fathom the depths of the human mind, bursts into the following strain:

> 'Not chaos, not
> The darkest pit of lowest Erebus
> Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
> By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
> As fall upon us often when we look
> Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man.'

Nevertheless an unexpected missile discharged from the still more obscure region within, beyond the mind, has indisputably resulted in a miraculous redemption of the human personality, however few and far between may have been such occurrences. The missiles of the latter category are unmistakable evidences of 'an inmost centre in us all where Truth abides in fullness'. Truly the dawn of knowledge, in the words of Robert Browning,

> 'Rather consists in opening but a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without.' —*Paracelsus*

Well may one sing with the same poet:

> 'Hence may not truth be lodged alike to all
> The lowest as the highest? Some slight film
> The interposing bar which binds a soul
> And makes the idiot just as makes the sa
> Some film removed, the happy outlet whe
> Truth issues proudly?'

The pages of hagiography, though re with examples of continued concentrated a deavours culminating in their fructifica still furnish a sprinkling of sudden conversi gleaming like oases in a dreary desert. few typical instances are given below from lives of the Tamil saints.

DHANURDASA

Sri Ramanuja (1017 to 1137 A.D.), long-looked for Messiah of Vaishnavism was foreseen by the great saint, Nammal was predestined by his ocean-like compa to deliver millions of souls from the oppre of Kali (the iron age). This great Acho (Teacher) was living at the holy city of rangam in South India and busying hi with preparations for his grand spiritual m tration. The spring festival, a source of at tion for all and sundry, was once being in the town, and hundreds of devotees far and near were drinking deep the mi festive celebrations as well as the spiritual of witnessing the procession of the l Deity of Ranganatha, ringing with the s rous chants of Tamil and Sanskrit hy Enamoured of the rich repast for the eyes soul, which the occasion usually provi there came one day the young nymph Hemamba, the beloved wife of Dhanur the renowned mighty wrestler and athle Uraiyur nearby. As she, in the compan her brave husband, was sauntering along streets with the intention of enjoying the f val she happened to be the cynosure of n bouring eyes; yet a greater source of dis tion for the multitude was the uncom attention shown to her by the husband he stood like a captive before her eyes was gazing intently upon them while ho an umbrella over her head, lest those

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ossoms of eyes should fade by exposure to e scorching sun outside. Such an act of fatuation perpetrated in public excited the nazement of many devotees; how a well-own athlete could become so enslaved to minine beauty, amidst a crowd of spectators, gardless of shame and decency — and that a holy atmosphere — was beyond their com-ehension. At this juncture there appeared the scene Sri Ramanuja with a band of his sciples as he was returning from his bathe in e river Kaveri and casually his eyes fell on the couple and the unexpected spectacle at drew remonstrances and ridicules from the varm of pilgrims around them. The great orld-teacher paused a while musing upon the gnificance of the scene and exclaimed, 'Be-old the power of lust! Here is a mighty alwart of repute under a spell of sensual sire! The girl appears to be the wedded wife the man; or perchance is his beloved para-our. His unappeasable passion for serving r has performed the feat of obliterating the nsciousness of his self, the world and the nse of shame in him. Alas! What a pathe-c misdirection of love!' Then he returned his monastery and despatched a messenger beckon Dhanurdasa to his presence.

Dhanurdasa, rejoiced beyond measure that call had come to him from the great Vaish-avite Prophet of the age, hurried thither and espectfully enquired of him about the pur-ose for which he was summoned. Sri Rama-uja without uttering a word stood gazing for while deep into the eyes of the man with a iew to fathoming the contents of his mind. Then he expostulated thus with him about his hameless act: 'Friend, let not my frankness offend you. None can deny that lust, like a yrant holds in its vice-like grip the strongest athlete, the bravest hero or even the erudite scholar. Nevertheless let me ask you if you are not ashamed of exhibiting your slavery to a pair of woman's eyes in a crowded street in broad day light, even to the extent of for-getting yourself and the world. As the strong-est among the strong, you are ready to fight against Yama, the God of death even, should he dare to approach you. In spite of all this prowess, would you be a slave of a woman? This is a marvel indeed, nay a source of dis-tress to me. This being a personal matter, delicacy permits only a passing reference to it.'

In reply to this Dhanurdasa submitted with folded hands: 'Venerable Sire, in me is no maddening lust, nor do I run after the wife of another. She is my wedded wife. Breathes there on earth anyone so fair as she? Oh! the beauty of her bewitching eyes! Who can sound the depths of that ocean of loveliness and charm? Truly do I forget myself in the ecstasies I go into at the sight of those allur-ing eyes. Lest the rays of the sun should dazzle her eyes and scorch the body, I hap-pened to hold an umbrella over her head. Believe me, Master, I am outspoken. I hold myself in readiness to abide by your com-mands.'

'Good. Let me question you thus: sup-posing I show you one possessing a pair of eyes far more beautiful and enchanting than hers, what would you do then?'

'Blessed am I then by your grace. Assu-redly I shall offer myself as a slave at the feet of that individual.'

'Come with me now,' said Ramanuja and took him straight to the shrine of Sri Ranga-natha in the temple. There he pointed to the lovely eyes of that sleeping Beauty Divine and asked Dhanurdasa, 'Are not these eyes beyond compare?' The Lord of Compassion deigned to reveal in a vision to Dhanurdasa the transcendent charm of His eyes overflow-ing with imperishable beauty; and he forth-with succumbed to their overpowering charm and stood rooted to the spot in utter forget-fulness of himself and the world around. The infatuation of lust instantaneously gave place to the inebriation of Divine effulgence that drove away all the darkness of ignorance from his heart; and pure devotion to God welled up from within transporting him to the spiritual plane where he was hungering and thirsting for ceaseless gaze and contemplation on the eyes Divine.

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Sri Ramanuja was watching with considerable interest the quickening tempo of Dhanurdasa's devotion and was beside himself with joy. He gave a finishing touch to his spiritual transformation by giving him initiation into the sacred mantras.

In the meanwhile, Hemamba, hearing of what had occurred to her husband, renounced her worldly life and rushed towards Sri Ramanuja who showered his compassion on her too. Soon she was admitted to the fold of his disciples and with the quick ripening of her devotion endeared herself to one and all of the congregation of Sri Vaishnavites. The couple shone like spiritual gems of purest ray serene and shed their lustre on other disciples of their great master, Sri Ramanuja.

KURESA

Sri Ramanuja ever since his birth had been recognized by preceptors gifted with spiritual vision as the incarnation of Lakshmana, the brother of Rama (and hence his name, Ramanuja), who was in turn no less than Ananta, the eternal and inseparable attendant of God Narayana. Yamunacharya, the great teacher, saw in him the future saviour of Vaishnavism, and nominated him as his successor in the line of Acharyas. Again Ramanuja, as a young student big with promise, was able to exorcise by his spiritual power an evil spirit that had possessed the King's daughter. All this had stirred the faith of the pious Srivaishnavites and fired their imagination. So hearing of the superhuman genius of Sri Ramanuja, two devotees coming of respectable Brahmin families, first took shelter in him and won the favour of being accepted as his disciples. Later the guru claimed both of them as his indispensable adjuncts as a sanyasin.

One of them was Kuresa, hailing from a village, Kuram by name, near Kanchipuram. The happy blend of abundance of riches and munificence in him made the masses confer on him the honorific title of 'Kuresa' (the ruler of Kuram) and made his palace-like residence the familiar resort of the poor and the needy who were fed and clothed there incess from morn till late in the night. Whe the end of the day's work the doors o mansion were closed, the ringing noise o hanging bells in them would be heard away at Kanchi. One night Mother Laks the Consort of the Lord Varada in the te chanced to hear the noise coming from a tance and enquired of Him about the of the noise in that hour of silence and ness. The Lord referred to the uncom generosity of Kuresa and added that the indicated the hour of his retiring to bed the discharge of his daily duties. Lak expressed Her desire to see him, and the sent His devoted servant Kanchi-Purna to him. Next morning Kanchi-Purna app Kuresa at his residence of the Divine Kuresa reflected for a short time and addressed the venerable messenger: 'Sire, the Shastras enjoin on us that the hand should not know what the right gives. Has my humble act done as a m of duty attracted the attention of the D Giver of all things to all? Stealthily then egoism crept into my heart to the exten disturbing the mind of God. Does this ridden vile wretch deserve to stand in Divine Presence? I am but a slave et of the Lord who has now reminded me o true nature.'

Stung to the quick by the Lord's refer to his insignificant self he allowed himse be despoiled of his immense wealth, im diately reducing himself to the level of the man, that he might be worthy to stand b the Lord of Kanchi, and directed his towards the city. Andal, his devoted pa in life, endowed by nature with spiritual q ties and filled with a spirit of reverential r nation to the will of God in him resolve once to follow in his foot-steps and wa behind him. Their path when night se lay through a vast dark forest, and the wom heart instinctively gave way to a sense of So she approached her husband and expre her dread of darkness.

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'Do you carry any precious burden with u ?' he questioned quickly; and Andal res-ctfully submitted, 'Not for my sake but for ee to drink water from, I have secreted a nall gold cup set with gems.' Kuresa laughed tright and added with great tenderness: Thou art simplicity incarnate! Has any one er heard of a beggar drinking water from a lden bowl? Hand it over to me.' Receiving e cup from her he threw it away to a great stance and then smilingly asked her, 'Has e sense of fear fled for ever from your ind?'

The couple reached Kanchi and led a life indigence by begging food from several uses. But their hearts were set on God one and applied themselves to the acquisi-n of spiritual wealth. Their strange trans-rmation could not escape the 'eagle' glance Sri Ramanuja who warmly welcomed them the math and made them his disciples. uresa in time became the dearest of his dis-ples by virtue of his unsurpassing devotion, mpassion, purity and spirit of self-sacrifice; d Ramanuja reserved a special niche for m in his heart. The Vaishnavas at large nferred on him the distinctive cognomen of Alwar' (a title reserved for only the twelve lwars).

KANNAPPA

At Kalahasti, 15 miles away from Reni-nta in South India, there lived by the side a hill teeming with game, a hunter chief, agan by name. Hunting was his pastime. e was skilled in archery, brave, relentless nd rich, and was the idol of his tribe. He ad a son named Thinnan, by virtue of his hysical strength, who being an expert in rchery, the profession of his race, was in the orn of his youth crowned the chief of the ommunity.

When Thinnan one day according to the sual custom started on his 'maiden' hunt, with the necessary preparations, surrounded y a troop of trained hunters, it so happened hat they while in pursuit of their own choice quarry were scattered throughout the forest. Thinnan, accompanied by two attendants, chased a boar and wandered far into the thick of the wood; but when the boar got stranded in the midst of some trees it was approached unawares and finally killed by Thinnan. Full of joy at his victory, yet hungry and thirsty after the fatiguing chase, Thinnan enquired whether drinking water was near by; and one attendant pointed to a river at the foot of the Kalahasti hill. Asking the other attendant to roast the flesh of the boar, Thinnan expressed a desire to go up the new hill with the guidance of the former attendant. When they started, the latter informed his master that a pleasant surprise would await him there since the hill top was the abode of a famous Deity, and persuaded him to spend some time there in worship. Thinnan at first hesitated as he was an utter stranger to the idea of God and worship; yet prompted by curiosity he finished his bathe in the cool limpid stream and commenced his journey.

As he was ascending the hill at noon he was feeling a strange overpowering sensation and to his astonishment his heart was overflowing with an immeasurable pure love, the like of which he had never experienced before. He was involuntarily drawn up by some mysterious power, and like the spiritual seeker going up the steps in the ladder of God-realisation one by one, moved higher and higher up the hill till he reached the top. Catching the glimpse of the Lord from a distance, he rushed madly towards Him and embraced the Divine Form which appeared to be living. His hair stood on end, tears streamed from his eyes, and a cry of delight burst from his lips: 'How blessed am I to discover Him here!' He became an embodiment of devotion and in a tone of sweet solicitude enquired, 'Art Thou all alone in this dense jungle abounding with wild elephants, bears and tigers?' The bow slipped from his hands and Thinnan observing things strewn on and around the Divine Person exclaimed, 'Who hath thrown leaves and flowers and poured water too? Why this improper act?' His attendant replied, 'Once

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coming hither in the company of your father, I saw a Brahmin decorating the Lord with flowers and leaves and feeding Him ; perchance he has done the same today also.' Then it struck Thinnan's mind that such acts would be pleasing to God ; but how could he decorate or feed God, in his inability to bear the pangs of separation from Him even for a short while ? Summoning up all his courage, he would go out but the thought of His solitariness would force his steps back. He sighed and said to the Lord, 'Alas ! I have not the heart to leave Thee alone in this unsafe forest ; nor can I stay here while hunger is pinching you. What a dilemma am I in !' Mustering up all his strength again, he rushed out of the place with bow and arrows, bowing before the Lord. His attendant had prepared a fire and Thinnan was busy roasting the flesh of the boar and testing the softness by pressing each piece between the teeth and finally passed a rod through the select pieces. The two attendants perceiving that Thinnan's madness was quickly on the increase even to the extent of not noticing their presence, left him alone out of sheer disgust and returned to their village for fetching a 'mantravadi' (one skilled in incantations) to cure their master of his God-madness.

Thinnan, after preparing the flesh, desired to carry water for bathing the Lord and flowers for decorating Him. In the absence of a vessel he filled his mouth with the clear river-water and after plucking flowers thrust them through his tuft of hair. With the bow in one hand and food in the other, he reached the hill ; and after brushing aside with his slipper the flowers on and around His person, bathed Him in the water he poured from his mouth and decorated Him with the flowers on his hair, and then entreated Him to eat the flesh he placed in front. He kept watch throughout the night, lest wild animals should do harm to Him ; and at day-dawn went out a-hunting into the forest for getting fresh food. Bound by ties of glowing devotion to the Lord he was thus sticking to his programme of service for days together.

Meanwhile, Sivakosariar, the orth Saivaite Brahmin who was carrying on worship in strict accordance with the Sha of yore to his heart's content, observed the desecration of the Lord's shrine with bones etc. was continuing day after day. he fervently prayed to the Lord for the vention of the repetition of that sinful a a probable hunter. But that night the blessed him with a vision and eulogised uniqueness of the hunter's 'prema'-ri mode of worship, adding these words : 'R min, do not regard him as a hunter. form is made of pure super-human love. of his sandalled foot flows the river of dev sweet. His body is a pure receptacle con ing which water becomes holy. The that he spits upon Me is purer than Ganges ; his flowers fall on Me like the shower of flowers that budded and blosso as it were, on the stem of his body. The he tests between his teeth is like the oble poured on the fire of Yajna. Watch tomorrow ; I shall reveal to you the natu his deeds.'

The Brahmin priest marvelled at the L utterances, and next morning hid himself secret place from which he could watc happenings in the shrine. It was the day after Thinnan's first contact with the He came and apologized to the Lord for inevitable delay in his arrival ; and wi heart heavy with sorrow and a mind distu by forebodings of an unknown impor watched, from a distance, the Lord dear him than his self. When lo ! a drop of trickled from one of His eyes. Immedi he ran towards Him, while the water fell his mouth, the flowers from his head an bow and the flesh from his hands. Bei his wit's end he swooned in despair. W up he took courage and asked, 'Who this ?' He looked around and rushed o search of any mischievous hunter who probably have injured him. On finding in the neighbourhood, he went and fe some medicinal herbs and squeezed the into his eyes but it was of no avail. Sud

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e familiar proverb, 'Flesh as cure for flesh' shed across his mind and he boldly and vously, with the sharp end of an arrow, ooped out one of his eyes and applied it on e affected eye of the Lord. The flow stopng, Thinnan danced with joy.

But alas! the other eye of the Lord too gan to bleed. He cried, 'I have known the medy and will apply it.' Putting his left toe the bleeding eye, and taking the arrow he gan to remove his other eye. The Lord, able to bear this sight, caught hold of Thinn's hand, and in an ambrosial voice cried ree times '*Nillu Kan-appa*' in Tamil—which eans, 'Stop this act of removal of the eye; name thee) Kannappa, stand; child dear my eye, stay here'—and pointed to His ht side. Ever since Kannappa has been nding at the right side of the Lord of Kalasti. Thus did the Divine Alchemist of the ll transmute the hunter's heart of iron into e heart of gold of the ripest devotee, Kanppa, within the short span of six days. hus did the hunter fall a prey to the Hound Heaven even without his knowledge.

PATTINATHTHĀR

In the district of Tanjore in South India at averipūmpattinam, a famous and prosperous wn situated at the mouth of the river Kāveri, ere lived in the 10th century a pious orthoox vaisya couple who bore the names, Sivaēsar and Jnānakalāmbāl. As a result of eir earnest observance of prayers, vigils and ows they were blessed with a son, Pattinathhar, alias Thiruvenkādar. At the age of five nfortunately the boy lost his father and was rought up under the loving care of the nother. The precocious boy even at that ender age had a longing to perform Sivaorship and was constantly yearning for the lessings of a spiritual preceptor. In his nxiety for God-realization he would forego his ood and sleep and think of Siva both day and ight; at last the Lord vouchsafed him His ssurance of protection in a vision and commanded him to live at the town of Swetharanam nearby.

At the age of six one day Thiruvenkadar was spending his time in prayer at the temple of Siva there. Suddenly a Brahmin Brahmachari well-versed in Veda and Agamas appeared before him and offering a Siva Linga taught him the proper mode of ritualistic worship and initiated him in the mysteries of the five-lettered mantra of Siva. Tiruvenkadar was steadfast in the pursuit of his spiritual practices and one day God miraculously filled his house with untold wealth in the form of gold, precious stones, and the like, akin to that of Kubera, the God of riches. With this help he went on driving a roaring trade in countries beyond the sea.

Years wore on and when Thiruvenkadar attained the marriageable age, at the instance of his mother he entered upon the life of a householder with Sivakāmiammaiyār as his partner. Thirty-five years old as he was, no child adorned his house, and this made him sore afflicted. At the same time there dwelt at Thiruvidaimaruthur a Brahmin Saivaite named Sivacharuma and his wife Susila who as a consequence of their lavishing all the wealth in worship and gifts to the devotees and the poor were reduced to poverty, and were daily praying for the relief of their distress. Lord Siva, in view of the simultaneous satisfaction of the ardent entreaties of the two pairs of devotees for progeny and riches respectively, commanded Sivacharuma to pick up the child—whose form He would assume Himself the next day—lying under the vilva tree in the temple and give it to the childless Pattinaththar at Kaveripumpattinam in exchange for an equal weight of gold and precious stones. The pious couple found the Divine child at the appointed place and Susila after taking the child and suckling it was tempted to carry it home in defiance of God's command. They directed their steps homeward but Divine grace intervening they missed that path and repaired to Kaviripumpattinam, where in a garden near a house they refreshed themselves for some time.

Meanwhile the Lord commanded Thiruvenkadar also in a dream to meet Sivacharuma

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and his wife in the particular garden and receive the child in exchange for an equal weight of gold and diamonds. So Thiruvenkadar met the couple, took them home with great reverence and received the child giving in return the price fixed by the Lord. The new baby was named Maruthavanar after the Lord of the place and in the course of years grew into a bright young boy remarkable for his intelligence, handsome features and skill in detecting flaws in pearls and diamonds. When he attained his sixteenth year, consistently with the custom of his community, with his father's permission he departed with other young merchants to some far-off island in a ship for carrying on his trade in diamonds.

Maruthavanar stayed in the island and plied his trade, earning immense gains and spending his wealth in religious and humanitarian service. His friends by selling their merchandise in distant countries made huge profits within a short period and returned to the island. When they expressed their eagerness to know how Maruthavanar fared in his business, he replied that he had acquired only a large number of cow-dung cakes and an enormous amount of a mixture of crushed rice and Bengal gram in exchange for his commodities. His comrades had a hearty laugh over the affair and in a few days the party returned in a ship to Kaveripumpattinam. Thiruvenkadar, coming to know of his son's return, hastened to the ship. There he saw his son piling up the cowdung cakes and the mixture in a box safely. On examining a cowdung cake by breaking it into two, Thiruvenkadar realized that each of the cowdung cakes had a sparkling diamond within and the mixture contained numerous minute granules of gold.

Rejoicing beyond measure at the immense fortune the son had gained, Thiruvenkadar desired to give him a warm embrace. He ran in search of him hither and thither but nowhere could he be seen. As he was sitting in a melancholy mood, his wife delivered a small box which the son intended to give him. He opened the box and saw that it contained only an eyeless needle and a scrap of palmyra leaf bearing the writing, 'Not even an e needle shall keep company with you d your final exit from the world.' Pattinat mused a while; and since his contact wit Divine Marudavanar had already ignite spiritual being, there was now a sudden renunciation which burnt to ashes all desires for possession, life and enjoyment burst forth with a series of poems, which composed off-hand, breathing the spir utter disgust for mundane life with all it plications. He ordered his head-clerk to all his wealth to be plundered freely by multitude and came out of the house fla like an unsheathed sword. He wandered distance and stayed in a public shed. kith and kin, friends and followers me there and deplored their bitter loss of a rous patron in him. But a volley of assuring them of divine protection and vincing them of the impermanence of all objects was his only response. The ki the land, on hearing of this sudden fit of re ciation, marvelled and sought his pres Impatiently yet pathetically he question friend Pattinaththar thus: 'Why this b guise symbolic of the renunciation o worldly pleasures you were heir to? Wh your gain thereby?' Out came the cru reply, 'See, you are now standing while I sitting. Such is the merit of a reli mendicant.'

Tradition points out that it was Kubera denizen of the celestial region that took in the world of mortals and through the of the Lord attained emancipation — glo to the human birth! Thus did the Lord asunder all the earthly ties of the prin merchants and make him the prince of m It was this rare renunciation that made saint Thayumanavar pay an immortal t in the verse:

> 'None like Pattinaththar can renounce his though the whole world was false.'

Blessed are they that renounce every of earth, for they shall gain the eternal dom of the highest heaven.

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BENGAL

SHANKAR NATH ROY

Sudden conversion is a strange phenomenon that, at times, occurs in the life of saints. How it happens and how it works, is difficult to ascertain. Apparently such a conversion with its broad sweep and melodramatic approach, leaves people wondering at the supernatural and the unknown. And to the individual recipient its effect is so over-powering, far-reaching. Practically it revolutionises him, makes him emerge as a new man.

In fact, every manifestation has its underlying cause, its origin and process of development, though they may not be visible. Similar is the case with sudden conversion that basically transforms a man, be he a habitual spiritual-aspirant or not. It is the cumulative result of a variety of inner currents that are not easily perceptible. And very truly our ancients tried to explain all this by *praktanas* and *sattvic samskaras* of past lives.

Some outstanding saints of Bengal were found to be metamorphosed by such conversion and a few interesting anecdotes about them are being related here. First, we propose to take up Lord Sri Chaitanya.

CHAITANYA

It was a cool December day in the year 1430 of Saka era. Young Visvambhara Misra, for which was the name of Chaitanya before he took *sannyasa,* has come over to Gaya as a pilgrim. He intends to perform the Pindadana ceremony of his father at this holy place. The morning sun was up in the sky radiating its crimson rays. After his ceremonial ablution in the sacred Falgu Visvambhara hurried to the main temple. Lord Gadadhara's sacred foot-print is preserved here from time immemorial. The young pilgrim must make his obeisance to it first.

All these days, while trudging his way to Gaya from Navadwip, Visvambhara was having unusually emotional feelings and experiences. A kind of mystic beckoning was there all the while. What it was, what it really meant, he did not know. Temperamentally Visvambhara does not like mystic and sentimental approach to life. He is a great scholar and has an inordinate passion for logical subtleties and fineries. Brandishing the cudgel of such subtleties he will usually terrify local scholars. Diatribes and innuendoes are his favourite sport. But this Gaya pilgrimage seems to have cast a mystic spell on him and is beginning to change him. Yes, he is feeling so shaky these few days.

There is a medley of crowd inside the Temple. Priests, Pandas, and devotees all are paying homage to Lord Vishnu. Traditional hymns of praise are being chanted, paean of love and reverence is reverberating on the four walls. What a charm ! What an edifying sensation one would have in this sanctuary ! Visvambhara's heart was unlocked and a stream of celestial joy gushed out from within. He remained enthralled and stupefied for some time.

And then an unusual emotion and mystic ecstasy stirred up within him, he was completely overpowered. Tears — inexhaustible tears welled up and began to trickle down his cheeks and there were mighty shivers in his body. People inside the sanctuary were wondering, who this remarkable devotee was. And what captivating personal charm he possessed ! His tall and exquisitely beautiful form, chiselled face and golden complexion made him look like a prince among men. His devotional ecstasy won for him high tributes. People became extremely curious about him.

With a tremendous shiver Visvambhara was falling down on the floor when a Vaishnava saint hurriedly came forward, clasped him with both hands and gave support.

The very touch of this Vaishnava brought Visvambhara to his senses. On opening his eyes his joy was boundless, for he recognised that the Vaishnava was none else than Iswara-

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puri, an intimate disciple of Sripad Madhavendra Puri. Madhavendra was a highly reputed Vaishnava saint and his Krishna-intoxication was well known to millions of Indian devotees.

Visvambhara entreated, 'Oh Prabhu, I am really fortunate, for, today I have the privilege of having a glimpse of your beatific face. You are a great saviour, and what a puny man like me can do except making a total surrender to you! Do extricate me from this ephemeral life. Destroy my worldly shackles. Enable me to drink the ambrosia of Lord Krishna's lotus-feet'.

'Peace be with you, my son!' said Iswarapuri, with a mellifluous voice. Don't be worried any longer. You know, few months back both of us met at Navadwip, but we could not embrace each other so lovingly as we did today. For, time was not ripe then. The hour has struck. Visvambhara, I must say, Lord Krishna's grace is already being poured on you. Well, tell me where is the trace of that proud, truculent scholar of Navadwip in you? It is all gone. The sacred Foot-print of Lord Vishnu has worked miracle. Wait, my son, you will soon know your mission'.

'But, Revered Sir, I am sure, I will find no path in this darkness, unless you kindly show me light'.

Iswarapuri consoled the restless young soul and poured out his benediction.

Few days after, Visvambhara was initiated by him to the Bhakti cult and Ten-lettered Gopala Mantra was whispered into his ears. This Mantra worked wonders and immediately a unique God-intoxication got hold of Visvambhara. The irresistible romance of Divine love was beckoning him. He must have a glimpse of Lord Krishna at any cost. This transitory world has become absolutely meaningless to him. He must drink *amritam* from the chalis held in the hand of his beloved Lord.

The conversion had revolutionised Visvambhara and turned him into a saint. The proud and pedantic Pundit in him is no more, he is now totally humbled. Gone are the days of sabre-rattling. The love of fineries and desire for academic bouts have all vanished.

From now on he is to weep and wait for Krishna's Darshan and for a taste of His transcendental, divine love. Few days after, on his way from Gaya, in Kanai-Natshala, Visvambhara had his desire fulfilled. Lord Krishna was graciously revealed to him. The Pundit began to pursue a life of erotico-devotion of the highest order.

After an elapse of thirteen months Visvambhara felt impelled to take to asceticism. He took his *sannyasa* initiation from Keshava Bharati and eventually settled in Puri. Thus with him, Vaishnava faith and movement took a new orientation. Radha-Krishna Lila culture revived and given a remarkable fillip. A social revolution took place in Eastern India through the ideas of all-embracing love advocated by him. Vaishnava sect turned into a great proselytising force and gave refuge to countless men and women irrespective of caste and creed. His contribution to religious culture was one of the most outstanding in the world had ever seen.

SHAMACHARAN LAHIRI

It was a clear, shining afternoon in Ranikhet, Almora. Relaxing on a cane-sofa in a lonely camp Lahiri was pondering. What on earth was the reason for his sudden rushing him up here like this? Military authorities want to have a new cantonment here and some urgent survey work is to be taken up. Lahiri, a young office assistant attached to Danapur establishment, was asked to come immediately. He reached Ranikhet, but since then no further advice reached here from Headquarters. He had nothing to do except a little file-work in the morning and the rest of the time he killed by gossiping with his peon and the labourers.

Yonder was the Himalayas in all its magnificence and captivating beauty. Tiers of snow peaks rose against the turquiose sky. Shades of colour continued all day long—red, crimson, purple and blue. Yes, it is only

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malayas that kept him enlivened in these erwise dull and drab days.

At a little distance from the camp lay the ona-Giri, a gaunt, rugged little hill. A halo mystery seemed to hang around this holy . Only the other day Lahiri's peon, a local tic, was telling him glibly all about its myths d miracles. How gullible these village folks , Lahiri muttered to himself. Needless to , with a derisive smile he dismissed those iry tales'!

Nevertheless, for some reason or other, ona-Giri cast its spell on Lahiri. One after- n, alone he began to climb up the hill. It was an arduous job, no doubt, and he was ling tired when he came near the peak. The ning sun was radiating its saffron rays over snow-capped mountains. The coloured aks looked like the wavy matted hair of rd Shiva glimmering in celestial light. Lahiri used for some time, he was spell bound!

'Shamacharan! Shamacharan Lahiri!'— sharp masculine voice darted out from the ry peak of Drona-Giri.

Lahiri was puzzled beyond measure. Who the fellow shouting his name over there? hiri is a newcomer at Ranikhet and nobody re seems to know him. It is something credible. But he must have to unravel the ystery, so he walked up to the summit. And re there was another big surprise for him. n old Yogi with big overflowing matted hair, as staring at him with his large sparkling es.

With a bewitching smile the Yogi said, 'How ce of you Shamacharan! You have come to e at last! Perhaps you have been wondering, ow could I know your name. Yes, my boy, know you better than any of your best kin. e are known to each other and very inti- ately too. Of course, I appreciate your diffi- ulty — you cannot possibly comprehend all is just now. But don't worry. Come, do ollow me'.

Like a mesmerised person Shamacharan fol- owed him to a cave nearby. The Yogi lit up n torch and his face beamed up with joy. Pointing to a cave-corner he asked, 'Shamacharan, do you recognise all these articles?'

With a curious gaze he found lying there a tiger-skin, a water bowl, ochre-coloured *koupin* and robes, presumably belonging to some ascetic.

He fumbled for a while and then said, 'But Sadhu Baba, what have I got to do with them?' The Yogi came closer and touched on his backbone. A soft simple touch, but what a wondrous feat it proved to be. Shamacharan's body began to experience an intense vibration. The tremor continued and eventually raised his consciousness to an incredibly high plane. The supernatural power of the Mahatma opened up a series of memories of his past life.

He ejaculated, 'Well, surely this tiger-skin, this water bowl and the robes, had all been used by me. They are mine — Yes, all of them. How foolish I was to be oblivious so long'.

'It is true, son, you are the rightful owner of all these. You were a Yoga-adept in your last life and you had me as your Guru. While practising hard *sadhana* you breathed your last here, in this very cave. I had been waiting all these long years to get hold of you. And now I must see that your past Yoga-attainment is duly credited to you and that you pursue your *sadhana* and have full realisation during this life under my guidance'.

Yogi's face lit up with a facetious smile. He added, 'Shamacharan, as a matter of fact, you did not come over at Ranikhet to work for your office-camp — rather your office had to shift here for your sake'.

'Baba, surely that is not a believable story'.

'My son, the fact of the matter is, I thought of bringing you down immediately. For, the time had come to hand over to you your own spiritual treasure that was lying with me. Force of my will paved the way. A superior officer of your department erroneously sent a telegram to send here immediately a camp and an assistant. That is why you had to come down. But the mistake has now been found out and

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you are going to be called back soon to Danapur. Meanwhile I will have you initiated to Yoga cult'.

Born in a village named Ghurni in West Bengal in the year 1828, Shamacharan was brought up in Banaras. While working as a clerk at Danapur military office this miracle happened in his life. He was then barely thirty.

Through the grace and power of the Mahatma of Drona-Giri, popularly known as Babaji Maharaj, Shamacharan Lahiri was made into a wondrous Yogi and very soon his *sadhana* was fulfilled with God-realisation. Thousands of devotees in North India benefitted by his Yoga instruction.

RAM THAKUR

It was the last day of Ambubachi, the most outstanding religious festival of the holy Kamakhya hill. All day long, in the scorching heat of June, thousands of pilgrims were climbing up to the top to pay homage to the Mother Goddess. Ascetics, hermits and spiritual aspirants of all varieties assemble here like this, every year. It is generally believed that the blessing and grace of the Deity are wont to come down more easily during this sacred period.

Rama, a boy of sixteen, has also come over here with some friends. After his ablution in the sacred *kund*, he made obeisance to the Devi. This duty over, he had nothing to do for the rest of the day. He began sauntering in the temple area and in the mango groves nearby.

There was no money left in his pocket, for the few coins he had were exhausted on his way to Kamakhya. Friends who accompanied him seemed to be missing as they got mixed up in the motley crowd. But Rama remained nonchalant. He was a devout type of young boy, and what did he care for a morsel of food when he had the fire of Mantram ablaze within him? In fact, he had a mystic vision few years back and got a sacred Mantram from a divine messenger. But what all this was about, he could not comprehend up till this day.

The festivity was over and the crowd melting away. Darkness of night enve the holy hill and Rama was glad. For, h accustomed to regular meditation at Now, he will get his opportunity to sit in a quiet corner.

It was dead of night. Sitting under a porch of the temple Rama was immers his Japa and meditation. Below the spangled sky the valley was wrapped deep slumber. A weird calm prevailed hill top, nothing was audible except the of birds and whisper of wind-driven foli

From behind a colonnade a heavy blurted out — 'Ram! Ram!'

Rama became alert and wondered wh calling him at this unearthly hour. Af few minutes, the tiger-voiced man was again. This time, appeared before him a sive human form, a *sannyasi*. In the dim available in the porch Rama could som size up the strange visitor. He is a s built ascetic and his large, protruded gleamed like fireballs. A thickset garla Red-Java and big Red-sandal mark in the head indicate that he belongs to Tantric The long overflowing matted hair lends a cial stateliness to this Saint. Rama was a more surprised to find that he was not al ther unknown to him. A few years bac his mystic vision, this Tantric *sannyasi* app to him and vanished after delivering a s Mantram.

The visitor said in a heavy voice, 'I don't delay any more. My boy, come with me. You have nothing to be afraid

In a flurry of excitement, Rama follow foot-steps. Through a long, narrow jungl they eventually reached a cave in a nearb Young Rama was remarkably lucky, for, auspicious moment next morning he endowed with Diksha-Mantram.

To his great surprise Rama found th Mantram was the same he had been ini with in his previous mystic vision.

Rama Thakur was born in Dinga-Man East Bengal in the year 1860. He p

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bout fifty years in the caves of the Himalayas nd forests of Assam and Madhya Pradesh. hrough a prolonged and strenuous practice f extensive sadhana he came to fulfil the dream f his life. He succeeded in mastering both antra and Yoga sadhana by the grace of his aforesaid Guru — popularly known as Ananga Swami. Rama carved out for himself a most outstanding place amongst the God-realised sannyasis of modern India and had thousands of spiritual aspirants as his devotees and disciples.

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udden Conversion of Saints

BENGAL

SATCHIDANANDA DHAR

Cult of Bhakti and God's Grace

There is a thing called God's grace in the lt of Bhakti (devotion to the Deity). God an ocean of undeserved grace. That He ves His creatures is but an act of favour on is part. No reason whatever is detectable ehind this grace — it is causeless. In the hagavadgita we see Lord Sri Krishna showed is universal form to Arjuna, doing him a pecial favour, and at length He asked Arjuna, oint-blank to mind that neither by sacrifices, or by Vedic studies, nor by the performance f any Vedic rite, this special form, this World-orm, of the Supreme Being, can be seen. He, hom God favours, alone is blessed with a ision of this form. God Himself is reminding is devotees, time and again, of His own avour.

Divine Grace Unmerited

The Bhakti cult holds that this Divine grace as no special cause. Japa (muttering of nantra), meditation, worship, severe penance, acrifices and such other prescribed rites — nothing can be held responsible for Divine grace. '*Kripāhi Kevalam*' — grace is the only thing that counts. Ordinary intellect fails to ascertain the purpose behind this unmerited grace, or to discover any causal connection here. But on supposition or inference of the fruit of good deeds done in the previous birth, it may partly be possible to ascertain the cause of this favour. Even it so happens that God lavishes His special favour on him who is apparently a sinner, anti-theistic, or an apostate. The robber Ratnākar came to be sage Vālmīki, Saul turned into Saint Paul and Jagāi and Mādhāi, the robbers, became Brahmachāris and ideals of good conduct and of the Vaishnavas. No cause is apparent of the sudden conversion into saints of the robber Ratnākar, Saul and the robber Angulimal (whom Buddha converted into a saint). Not that they had endeavoured to realise God, living up to noble standards or by means of spiritual Sādhanā. Some incident or other brought them in contact with a prophet or Divine Incarnation, and all on a sudden (?) turned them into saints or siddhas. Instance is seen of such unmerited Divine grace in the life of every Incarnation.

Sri Sri Chaitanya, the Great Lord and Incarnation

The Great Lord Chaitanya is a Divine Incarnation. He arose in Bengal in order to explain the real significance of Love-as-religion and of Bhakti. His religion created in Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and the Deccan a peculiar religious trend and afforded peace to millions of the suffering humanity. It has turned the human mind from the material world towards God. And by reason of their coming in the divine contact of the Great Lord Sri Chaitanya, several ordinary lives have all at once been converted into Saintly ones.

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Erudition Vs. *Divine Realisation*

Scriptural knowledge and erudition do but aggrandise man's egotism. The object of scriptural knowledge is to proceed towards divinity. But it is seen in many cases that the pride of scriptural erudition stands in the way of our attaining to God. It is easier to disentangle ourselves from the shackles of material affluence, but the pride of erudition, to all intents and purposes, refuses to leave us easily. On the other hand, God does not favour us with His appearance until and unless we shake off all false pride and egotism, and become candid and prideless like a child. Lord Chaitanya was scholarship and at the same time devotion to God incarnate. At Navadwip he was better known as 'Nimāi Pandit'. Navadwip was the chief venue of scholars of the day. Many of the then scholars of Navadwip indulged in mere shastric discussions, interpretations, subtle arguments and debates. They would not feel it necessary to practise the various sorts of meditations (Dhyāna, Dhāranā, etc.) prescribed in the shastras. The great Lord much regretted the situation. He turned many a proud scholar into a devotee by shattering his pride of learning. The champion debator Keshava, a Kashmirian scholar, was one of them.

Conversion of the champion debator Keshava of Kashmir

It was in the days when Sri Chaitanya was highly spoken of as a scholar everywhere at Navadwip. In spite of his tender age, Nimāi Pandit was a spirited person by virtue of his erudition and divine power, and consequently he was in high esteem and regard of the Navadwip scholars. If any scholar entered into a debate with him, he would humble down his pride. But even the beaten opponents had to show respect for Nimāi whose habitual goodness and suavity of manners charmed them. Nimāi could not tolerate that his pupils should, in any way, laugh at his fallen foe. Nimāi, the Incarnation of Narayana, aimed simply at humbling the pride of the proud.

Now, once there came to Navadwip a ch pion Brahmin pandit of Kashmir, Ke Misra by name. He was a successful pr tioner of Saraswati mantra. By the gra Saraswati he had won the laurels in the tries of Anga, Banga, Udra, Kashi, Ka and so on, where he had entered the lists cessfully. Now he made up his mind to his title of World-Champion by getting better of Nimāi Pandit of Navadwip. reached the ears of Nimāi too of the at Navadwip of this giant scholar. He n made any preparation for the debate wit pandit, nor challenged him to it, but we teaching various sciences to his pupils usual, on the bank of the Ganges. At a time the champion Keshava Misra a there. At the very first sight of N Keshava Misra got a little frightened at for unknown reasons. Nevertheless, he re bered the Saraswati mantra and entered House presided over by Nimāi Pandit, entreated him with great warmth and r to take a seat there. The reception over, N with his usual submission, spoke at great le in appreciation of the Pandit's fame as a s lar. At last he referred to the pandit's in poetry, and asked him to compose and some stanzas in eulogy of Ganga. The G Lord had this end in view that every one sent would be shorn of his sin on hear hymn to Ganga.

At the instance of Sri Chaitanya, the g poet and scholar verbally composed a ce of stanzas abounding in Gunas and A kāras, in praise of Ganga, and recited t to their ears. All the members of the H were charmed at this poetic genius of champion scholar and everyone admired from his heart. Thereupon Chaitanya s and requested the pandit to explain one o slokas composed by him so that they m grasp its inner significance. Accordingly, pandit gave to a sloka an interpretation unprecedented scholarship. When the p finished explaining the sloka, the Great L found faults with his sloka in three place

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s beginning, its middle and its end, and nquired of the pandit if he had anything to ay in support of those places. Whatever rgument the pandit advanced in justification f his sloka, Chaitanya refuted with more ogent arguments, whereupon the pandit felt elpless, puzzled and abashed. Perceiving this eling of helplessness in the scholar, the Great ord abstained from putting him to further hame, and asked him to quote another sloka. ut the scholar had by this time spent himself, nd no other sloka too seemed ready to flow rom his mouth. This helpless state, too, of e pandit struck Chaitanya, who then said to e pandit by way of consolation, 'You are uch fatigued today. So please rest for the ight. We shall resume the debate tomorrow'. e had such honour even for the crushed dversary.

The beaten scholar went home and retired or the night after muttering a second time he Saraswati mantra and worshipping the oddess. In his dream the Goddess of Learn- ng appeared and advised him to surrender imself to the Great Lord. The Goddess left naking him alive to the fact that devotion to Vishnu is superior to scholarship. On the morrow the proud, egotistic scholar resigned himself at the feet of Sri Chaitanya. There- upon he thus explained to the pandit what real learning is :

> Adore Krishna with a determined will
> Till the mind attaches to His lotus feet.
> For that's the fruit of learning, to be sure.

So saying the Great Lord fastened the pandit in a close embrace.

> At the embrace of the Lord of Vaikuntha,
> Liberated grew the Vipra from bondage all.

The Champion scholar then renounced all his belongings and left home a recluse without attachment to anything.

> Bestowing his all on the deserving
> The champion left free from attachment.

(*Sri Chaitanya Bhagavata,* Adikhanda, Chap. X.)

Conversion of Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, a Vedanta scholar, into a Devotee of Vishnu

Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma was a religious scholar at the court of Maharaj Pratap Rudra. He took his abode at the sacred city of Puri, the seat of the Goddess Sri (Sriksetra). He too was an erudite scholar in many branches of learning. At that time a profound scholar of his calibre in the Vedanta Philosophy there was none. As the court-scholar of Maharaj Pratap Rudra, and also as a vastly learned man, he harboured much pride of learning. Further, as an exponent and appreciator of the Vedanta Philosophy, he regarded himself on a par with the Sanyasins. A Vedantist that he was intellectually, he found no distinction between the householder and the monk. But the knowledge did not yet dawn on him that far far above the learned householder is the all-renouncing monk. He, therefore, could not approve of Sri Chaitanya's renunciation of the world and admission into the order of Monks, and out of his pride of learning, he set to instructing him that his adoption of the monk's life had been a function of his young and undeveloped mind. This wrong idea of the Sārvabhauma (Lord of all lands) the Great Lord removed with many tricks and turned him from a mere 'Pandit' to a real devotee of God.

At the sight of the god Jagannath at Puri, the Great Lord, Chaitanya fell into a divine ecstasy, which culminated into Samadhi. The Sārvabhauma was charmed to see the fair-complexioned, butter-like, shining person of Chaitanya whom, thereafter, he brought home, while he was still in the ecstatic state. There grew in the Sārvabhauma a tender feeling for him who had taken to the monk's life early. He began explaining to him what the duty of a monk was and reminded him also that the study of Vedanta was binding on every monk.

The Great Lord courteously admitting the Sārvabhauma to be the greatest exponent and instructor of the Vedanta Philosophy, express-

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ed his desire to learn the essence thereof from him. By the way, he demanded an explanation of the sloka 'Ātmārāmās ca munayas . . .' from the Sārvabhauma when the great scholar explained it in thirteen different ways.

> Having explained of the sloka
> Thirteen different senses.
> He held his tongue saying
> Capable of more am I not.

It was even beyond his imagination that further interpretations were also possible of this sloka. Then the Great Lord added many further explanations of the Sloka before the Sārvabhauma, who as he listened to them, was beside himself with the resulting rapture. Upon this the supremely merciful Lord Chaitanya, by his divine power (maya), assumed the six-armed form of Vishnu and deigned a sight of it to the Sārvabhauma. Lord Gaurānga then said to Vāsudeva :

> What, ho, Sarvabhauma, scholar best,
> Am I not entitled to the monk's order ?

Next the Great Lord made him blessed with a touch of his hand on his head. The Great Sārvabhauma then

> Eulogises the Lord again and again.
> Reciting verses in succession.

Redemption of Jagāi and Mādhāi

The grace of God is of paramount importance in spiritual life. This grace comes often through the saints and Incarnations. How the grace of and the contact with Sri Chaitanya brought about an instantaneous change even in the lives of sinners converting them into saints may be seen in the cases of Jagāi and Mādhāi.

There lived at Navadwip these two Brahmins, Jagāi and Mādhāi, who came of a noble and respectable family. They were cousins to each other and grandsons of Zamindar Śubhānanda Ray of Navadwip. In spite of their noble descent, Jagāi and Mādhāi, owing to the influence of evil company, became much perverted in youth. They made no scruples in perpetrating misdeeds like drinking, taking prohibited meat, stealing, robbery, and so on. None dared to raise their voice against perversities. Even the Kazi himself dared ask them to take their trial. Moreover, were the police chiefs of the city.

Now, during this time, Lord Nityāna the Great, and Haridās, the Devoted, by Sri Chaitanya, the Great Lord, had touring all Bengal preaching at every through 'Kirtana' the greatness of Name. On hearing about these tyran highwaymen, given to copious drinking, nanda resolved to initiate them in the religion of love. Haridās being apprise this resolve by Nityānanda, cited nume instances of their black deeds and insiste very cautious steps in the matter. Then dās and Nityānanda approached them said :

> Say Krisna, serve Krisna,
> Take up Krisna's name
> Krisna mamma, Krisna papa,
> Krisna gold, life.

But Jagāi and Mādhāi were hard nuts to c Taking them for humbugs they ran after amuck crying out all the while, 'Strike, str Both Nityānanda and Haridās ran as fa they could, and thus saved themselves. they repaired to Sri Chaitanya and re everything to him.

'What is the name of Krisna worth, i fail to reclaim these two sinners ?' — said Great Lord.

On another occasion, while Nityānanda on his way to Sri Chaitanya, by night chanced to meet Jagāi and Mādhāi. No so did Mādhāi heard the name of the Nityānanda, than he threw at him a potsh which at once caused a gush of blood from head. Nityānanda went on saying 'Kris Krishna,' the Lord's name, regardless of blow dealt by Mādhāi. At the sight of N nanda's blood Jagāi took pity on him rebuking Mādhāi for his blow, he engage nursing Nityānanda. The news reached tanya, who in his wrath, was about to p Mādhāi, when Nityānanda referred to compassion shown by Jagāi, and begged

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ya to reclaim the two brothers. At this the at Lord Chaitanya clasped Jagāi in an brace of love wishing that he might turn otees of Krisna. Owing to the touch of Great Lord, and his hearing Hari's name, āi immediately became mad for rapture, he attained divine consciousness. In his asy Jagāi was blessed with a vision of the d's four-armed form. Mādhāi too fell at feet of the Lord and begged his mercy. n their Lordships condescended to grant ne lives to them both.

At the Lord's command Madhai
Held Him in close embrace :
Then liberation resulted
From all his worldly ties.

er this :

By virtue of Chaitanya's grace,
Jagai and Madhai both,
Known as supremely virtuous
In the land of Nadia bide,
And taking secluded Gangetic bath
At the dawning of the day
Utter daily Krisna's name
Two hundred thousand times.

(*Chaitanya Bhagavata*, Madhya Khanda, (Chap. XIII. 15.)

At the command of Sri Chaitanya, Mādhāi eryday scoured and cleaned the bathing ghat of the Ganges, and waited upon the devotees who assembled for an ablution. And day after day he would beg forgiveness of the citizens of Navadwip for his past guilts. At this sudden and complete change for the better in Jagāi and Mādhāi, people were astonished and came to realise the divine power of the Great Lord. Mādhāi came to be known as Brahmachari because of his severe penance and saintly qualities.

Madhai practises extreme austerities
And fame spreads of his as a Brahmachari.

To this day exists, on the bank of the Ganges, Mādhāi's Ghat, the site of Mādhāi's practising penance, bearing witness to the religion of love preached by the Great Lord Chaitanya.

By the grace of Chaitanya
Relics to this day survive
That the people of the world
Sing as Madhai's Ghat.

The example of the sudden conversion of these two sinners turning overnight into devotees for life, has profoundly influenced down the centuries the lives of the people in the eastern part of the country, generating hope and faith in them.

THE DISPUTANT DIVINE

SWAMI PARAMATMANANDA

A Saiva Brahmin of Thirunavalur, Nambi Arurar name, was about to be married to a young girl. the auspicious hour of marriage an old Brahmin pped into the hall and exclaimed, 'This Nambi ur is my vassal according to a document signed his ancestors ; I stop this marriage'. Nambi rurar protested against this rude interference but e old man showed in his hand the document. ambi Arurar snatched it away and tore it to pieces. he indignant old man forced him to appear before e assembly of elders at his own village, Thirunnainallur nearby and there he established his aim by producing the original document. Nambi Arurar bowed to the decision. When the elders asked the old man where his house was in the village, he led them all to the temple and there he suddenly vanished. But lo ! Nambi Arurar saw in a vision God Siva who reminded him of his permanent abode at Kailas in His own divine kingdom and of his being His eternal slave prior to his birth in the mortal world. The truth of his real being flashed before Nambi Arurar who instantly fell down before Him, singing hymns in Tamil about his eternal slavery to the Lord Siva. Thus redeemed from an earthly life Nambi Arurar soon attained sainthood of a high order and became known as Sundaramurti Nayanar, one of the four great Saivite Samayacharas.

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NORTH INDIA

RAMLAL

The saints are men of God — divine gifts. They come into this world to liberate countless souls from the bondage of birth and death; people become sinless and pure in their blessed company. The saints guide the fallen and disgusted souls on the way to divine love, devotion, renunciation and self-realisation; they are sometimes products of the crucial circumstances, disappointments and sad dejections of worldly life. It so often happens that being discarded by their own kith and kin and having been suddenly blessed by holy men, people take to renunciation and non-attached life and turn great saints and devotees; such instances are numerous in the arena of saints' literature in the Hindi-speaking India. The sudden conversions of saints like Surdas, Mirabai, Tulsidas, Dharamdas, Rupkala, etc. bear testimony to the above assertion. Sometimes, Nature — the divine potency, of its own accord, grants occasions and opportunities to great souls to recognize their merits and renounce the worldly life and enter the fold of devotees, ascetics and self-realised followers of God. A life of renunciation and non-attachment is promptly recommended even by our scriptures. One of the illustrious holy books, the Padmapurana-uttarakhanda in the fourth chapter of the Bhāgavata-Māhātmya affirms and exhorts:

देहेऽस्थिमांसरुधिरेऽभिमतिं त्यज त्वं
जायासुतादिसु सदा ममतां विमुञ्च।
पश्यानिशं जगदिदं क्षणभंगुनिष्ठं
वैराग्यरागरसिको भव भक्तिनिष्ठः॥

It is to give up identification with the body consisting of bone, flesh and blood, to give up the feelings of *meum* with reference to wife and sons, etc., to look upon this world as momentary day and night and to love dispassion and be devoted to Bhakti.

TULSIDAS

The greatest poet of Hindi found his guide in his wife and through her teachings Tulsidas turned a devotee. The demon of d overshadowed everything between the s the earth. The goddess of lightni embracing the black clouds in her arms. It was pouring in torrents. Th night presented herself in awe-inspiring It was a dreadful sight to look at. Rat the beloved wife of Tulsidas, was half cated with the sleep that was dancing eyes. The lamp was emiting a dim ligh of a sudden she threw her glance on th which were shivering in the deadly Someone knocked at the door. The ch and young lady was at her wit's end. He she got up and was bold enough to unl door and to her great surprise, ente young man, her own husband. Both i gazed at each other but no word ca of their mouths.

'Ratnawali, I cannot live without you young man placed his right hand on th of his beloved wife and patted her w tender fingers.

'But how is it! your legs are dew mud in this stormy rain and how coul dare cross the overflooded river with boat in absence of ferry-men!' exc Ratnawali in great fear.

'I have come upstairs with the help rope.' The man tried to satisfy his be

'But this is a dead snake, hanging wards.' The lady fainted.

'My beloved, look at the plank on w crossed the river', the man tried to bri to senses and further added, 'It is all fo Ratnawali.' The lady regained conscio opened her eyes and cried out that i rather a corpse than a wooden plank.

The young man could not speak a word.

'Fie, oh my husband, only yesterday I to my maternal house and you could no separation; indeed, it is a matter of shame, my transitory body is compos

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TULSIDAS

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nes and flesh and is sure to be reduced to mere skeleton; in fondness for this body, u ventured to cross an ordinary river; if u cherish only so much love towards delight-g the Lord, Ram, son of Dasarath, you can ry easily steer through the ocean of mun-ne existence. Love Ram and Ram alone,' horted Ratnawali. Her words acted like rows on his tender heart and the worldly an turned a devotee with intense love for e Espouse of Sita.

The devotee then and there touched the et of his wife who acted as a preceptress to ad him in the realm of renunciation. Ratna-ali tried to persuade him to live in the house ut it was of no avail. He renounced his wife nd took refuge in the lotus-feet of Ram. xclaimed the young Brahman, the great evotee, the author of the great Hindi epic *Ramcharitmanas*, cautioning himself :

> Foolish mind! Listen to my advice. Understand at once, nobody could get happiness, having kept himself far from the feet of Lord Hari.
>
> The sun and the moon have been suffering much for the time when they separated themselves from the eyes and mind of the Lord, day and night they circumambulate the sky and even there the planet Rahu chases them.
>
> Though the Ganges is a holy river and is an object of praise in all the three worlds yet because of separation from the feet of the Lord, her flow has not been stopped. The Vedas have cleared all the doubts regarding the fact that misfortunes and calamities can end only through the selfless service of Ram, the Lord of the Raghu race. Oh, Tulsidas, leave all and become a true servant of Ram.

Thus Tulsidas came out of his father-in-law's house the very night and gave to the world his invaluable contribution—the *Ramcharitmanas*, the lake of the holy acts of Ram. His name is immortalised in the history of saints' literature. Thus Saint Tulsidas tasted the sweet nectar of divine love through the teachings of his wife, Ratnawali.

RAJJAB

A story is told about the Saint Rajjab who was rescued by his holy preceptor, Saint Dadu at the moment when he was going to fall a victim to the fear and anxiety of worldly life of vain enjoyments and sensuous pleasures. Rajjab was one of the greatest saints of medieval India and belonged to the cult of Dadu. He was born in 1624 of the Vikram era in Sanganer near Jaipur in Rajasthan. He was born a Mohamedan. His father was one of the greatly respected officials of the Jaipur kingdom. Rajjab was quite happy and prosperous. His marriage was settled in Amera, a place near Sanganer. At the foot of the Amera hills, there was the hermitage of the great Saint Dadu. It was a beautiful place enriched with aromatic scenes and charming gifts of nature. After noon, the sun was gradually and slowly moving towards the western horizon. The marriage procession of Rajjab was passing with majestic measures. Saint Dadu was surrounded by a number of disciples and was holding a holy discourse—Satsang. The clarionet's sweet melody had the captivating influence on the atmosphere. The bridegroom, Rajjab was reining his horse with grandeur. He was dressed in costly robes. The bridal crown on his head was enhancing the beauty of his young body. He was marching forward to grasp the hand of his bride. All of a sudden the horse stopped in front of the hermitage of the saint. Rajjab desired to have the blessings of Saint Dadu. He got down and touched the feet of the saint. No sooner Rajjab applied the dust of the holy feet on his forehead than the sweet remembrances of previous births opened before his eyes and he felt as if he had unending and eternal relationship with Dadu. Rajjab was going to mount his horse when at once Dadu exclaimed :

> 'Oh Rajjab, you committed a great wonder by placing the bridal crown on your head.
> You took birth to serve the Lord;
> And now you are embracing the hell.'

Rajjab was wonder-struck. He returned and placed his head on the lotus-feet of the great saint. The bridegroom entered an everlasting wedlock with the Almighty Lord and Dadu enlisted him as one of his most favourite

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disciples. Rajjab's love for his preceptor, Guru, was of a very high order. In commemoration of this colourful event, Rajjab always put on the robe of a bridegroom.

NANDDAS

An anecdote is current about the sudden conversion of the saint-poet Nanddas of the Vallabha cult. He earned distinction as Jayadeva of the Pustimarga. He was a contemporary of Tulsidas and was initiated by Gosain Vitthalnath, son of Shrimad Vallabhacharya, the founder of the Vallabha cult or Pustimarga. In his young age Nanddas was highly passionate and his mind was attracted towards worldly and sensuous objects of beauty. Once he was going to Dwarka from Mathura. Having reached Kurukshetra, he forgot the path and happened to come to the village of Sheehnanda. It was midday, the sun was very hot. Nanddas stopped in front of a house where a young lady was drying her hair having taken a refreshing bath; she was extremely beautiful and lovely. Nanddas could not move on and stood facing the back of the young one in anxious expectation to have a look at her charming countenance and was fully determined to eat and drink only after seeing her. She went inside the house and Nanddas could not be successful. Next day, he again stood in front of the house and on being asked by her husband, he related the true feelings of his heart because for him there was nothing to conceal. Fortunately the husband and wife were disciples of Shrimad Vitthalnath, who duly had initiated them into Pustimarga. They decided to go to Gokula in Vraja to have the blessings of the preceptor and ultimately started. Nanddas passionately followed the couple who reached the bank of the holy Jamuna and crossed the river on boat. The ferry-man did not take Nanddas to the other side because he was strictly prohibited to do so. Nanddas took his seat on the river-bank and began to feast his eyes on the blue-black beauty of the Jamuna. The grace of Shri Krishna was apparent before his eyes in the form of charming blue-black colour of the holy riv Divine sports. He completely forgot the and her vaguely unstable and beautiful plexion and realised that it was all en momentary and destructible. He comm praising the river Jamuna :

> 'Out of great love, Shri Jamuna came first o
> She knows the feelings of the devotees o
> Lord, this i
> She rushed on with great force.
> She fulfils the desires of the devotees, wh
> ever they ma
> Nanddas says that the Lord is pleased with
> only who sing the praise of the Jam

The young couple touched the lotus-fe their Guru, Shri Vitthalnath who immedi enquired about the young Brahman, N das. They were surprised to hear this. G Vitthalnath called Nanddas before him infused in him the true spirit of devotion calm resignation. The very first sight m him a staunch devotee and the char young lady could no more divert his atte even for a moment. He embraced the l of Vrindavan, Shri Krishna as his beloved dedicated himself to his preceptor; Gosainji who initiated him and accorded the Brahma-sambandha. He folded his h and fell at the feet of Shri Vitthalnath req ing him not to mind sins committed him so far but to relieve him of the son and sufferings of the deadly and venom ocean of mundane existence. Gosainji gra him his complete favour and grace. Nan never for a moment turned towards the tr tory world and became devoted to Krishna for ever. He composed coun songs on divinely sweet sports of the L and contributed much to the developmen devotional literature in medieval India.

GADADHAR BHATTA

It has been recorded about the Saint G dhar Bhatta that a Sanskrit verse of Gaudiya Saint Jiva Goswami made him nounce forthwith his all and enter Vrind for ever and take bath in the ocean of the of Shri Krishna. He was a passionate lo

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of the son of Yasoda, the Espouse of Radha. He was contemporary of the great Moghul, Akbar, and passed his time in singing the praise of Shri Krishna and related the stories of the *Bhagavata Purana*. One day Sri Jiva Goswami heard someone in Vrindavan reciting a famous poem — '*Sakhī Haun Shyām Rang Rangī* which runs as follows :

'O friend, I am plunged deep in love of Shri Krishna of dark complexion.
Having seen His form I have been enslaved.
His beautiful countenance has charmed me.
He accompanies me in dream but I lose Him in sleep.
He always abides before me when I am awake and does not go out of sight even for a trice.
My eyes have become his permanent abode.
Friend, who is that Krishna about whom I have heard that he goes to graze the cows ?
To whom should I say and who is to believe me ; why should I talk in vain ?
Gadadhar says, it is just like the taste of sweets for a dumb man.'

Jiva Goswami was beside himself with joy and in divine ecstasy longed to see and meet the composer of the song. He deputed two disciples to go to the poet and request him to come. He gave a letter also. The disciples reached the village of Gadadhar in the early morning of the next day and communicated the message to him. He was extremely delighted to note that he would be blessed by the great Saint Jiva Goswami. He went through the letter and his cheeks were wet with tears of intense love. The letter contained the well-known Sanskrit verse :

'Without having adored the lotus-feet of Shri Radha, without having resorted to the Vrindavan containing Her foot-prints and without having a talk with people who have their mind attached to Her thought, how is it possible to have a plunge in the ocean of love of Shri Krishna ?'

Gadadhar at once set out for Vrindavan and consecrated himself to the holy feet of Jiva Goswami and received his blessings. He resolved to live in Vrindavan and enjoy the company of the saints and devotees for ever.

GULAL SHAHEB

Though saints do not give much importance to miracles yet they also play wonderful part in transforming the manners of conduct and living. A miracle of the great Saint Bulla Saheb wrought a great change in the life of the great medieval saint of Satnami cult, Gulal Shaheb who was contemporary of Aurangzeb, the great ruler of seventeenth century. Gulal Shaheb was born in Samvat 1750 of the Vikram era in the village of Bhurkura of the Gazipur district of Uttar Pradesh in a rich Kshatriya family. He was an ordinary zamindar—owner of land, and had a natural longing to serve the saints and sages. He engaged a man, Bulaki Ram to look after his farms and cultivation. One day Bulaki Ram was ploughing a plot. Gulal Shaheb went to supervise his work and saw that having stopped the ploughing Bulaki Ram had taken his seat at a place. He tried to alert him about his coming and called aloud but the ploughman did not move from his seat. Being highly enraged at this misbehaviour he kicked Bulaki Ram and to his great surprise, he saw curd spilt on the ground. Bulaki Ram opened his eyes ; begged to be excused for his negligence as he explained that he had been engaged mentally in the service of the saints and while he had been serving curd, his attention got diverted towards him—the owner of the land. Gulal Shaheb at once fell at his feet and began to tremble. He asked Bulaki Ram modestly to explain to him the method of cultivating his farm-like life. Saint Bulla Saheb initiated him and accepted him as his disciple. Gulal Shaheb sang :

'Oh friend, the unknown is awakened in me ;
Having continuously sought Him, I have at last found out my Guru,
Now my mind has obtained shelter at his holy feet.
At the approach of evening I lighted the lamps ;
The tie of action has been broken,
The mind is intoxicated with the grace ;
I have followed the path beyond all the ferries or wharfs have been left behind,

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The sky is fraught with peals of thunder
And the eternal sound—Anahata has been sounded.
I have entered the region of transcendental delight and attained to high prowess.
I have won the battle and fixed the lance;
Gulal says that I have found the almighty Lord
My good luck has turned fruitful and the sin has disappeared.'

Thus Gulal Shaheb received the grace of his Guru. He wielded a very great influence on the Satnami cult.

RUPKALA

A very interesting story is told about the sudden conversion of Saint Rupkala who left his service of Inspector of Schools and came to reside in Ayodhya for ever. He was a native of the village of Mubarakpur of Chhapra district of Bihar province. From his very childhood, he was devoted to the service of saints. He was employed in the education department of Bihar. Once, while he was Inspector of Schools, he went on inspection of a school near Bihta station where he received a letter of his superior officer Mr. Martin urging him to go to Patna and meet Mr. Croft, the Director of Public Instruction, who was to leave Patna for Calcutta shortly. Rupkala reached Bihta station but the train had already left for Patna. To take shelter in the waiting room was the only alternative. After a short time he found himself miraculously present in the waiting room of Patna station with necessary papers; had a talk with the Director and after the departure of the train, came into the waiting room again; a nap presented itself to him in the waiting-room of Bihta station. This was to him surprising indeed. He strangely considered it a gracious warrant of God served on him to renounce the attachment towards the world and take to the life of devotion. He tendered his resignation and immediately started for Ayodhya — Saketa, the kingdom of sports of Lord Rama, and lived there all his life. He belonged to the category of the saints of Sakhī Sampradaya in which a sweet relation of love-sentiment is observed with the Lord who is treated as the Espouse of all beings of the universe.

SURDAS

One of the greatest saints of the Vallab cult in his young age was not able to have grace of his teacher or Sadguru. Howev God showered His grace upon him and Surd met his Preceptor.

'Surdas!' Shrimad Vallabhacharya w taken aback and pondered awhile.

'Swami Surdas presents his humble self be blessed by your Holiness and waits anxiou ly,' said the attendant and sought his ord with bowed head.

'No sooner had I started from Arail Vraja than my mind suddenly turned towar thinking about this swami. Indeed he is pious soul who has left his home and belon ings for good and wedded himself to seve renunciation and austere penance. My stay Gaughat on the holy bank of the Jamuna itself a blessing to me.' Shri Vallabhachar stood before Surdas and the heart of the latt fully enjoyed the fragrant bath in the oce of grace of the holy preceptor.

'It was my heart's desire to be blessed the sight of your Holiness. I am tossed hith and thither by the deadly and furious wav of the ocean of worldly existence. Save m steer my boat of life ashore, I am forlorn a badly harassed and perturbed.' Tears ran o of his lightless eyes and the blind mendica commenced wailing:

'Lord, I am the greatest sinner. There is no fit to be placed on a par with me. If the perm that you bestowed upon Ajamil, may come my lot, I shall be reassured and call other fall ones and fully believing that your name will bri us ashore, I shall encourage them to follow t same path of surrender . . . . . Says Surd O Lord! Save this band of sinners.'

Shrimad Vallabhacharya listened to the lame tation with rapt attention and reprimanded t blind singer for his plaintive wailing.

'Sing the glory and the enchanting stori of Lord Krishna,' was the further exhortatio

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of the great Acharya and on being told by Surdas that he absolutely lacked knowledge and understanding of the divine sports, Shri Vallabhacharya, out of grace and kind affection, narrated the full text of *Subodhini* — his illustrious commentary on the *Bhagavata Purana*. The mere narration and exposition of the divine mystery acted like a magic wand and Surdas possessed the complete knowledge of the sports of ShriKrishna and began to sing his praise in no time. He obtained the grace of his holy Preceptor and consecrated himself to his lotus-like feet. This meeting was a turning point in the life of the great divinely inspired poet, Saint Surdas, who presented Sursagar — the ocean of the sweet transcendental sports of the Lord of Radha — to the thirsty seekers and affectionate devotees.

SENA

God engaged Himself as a substitute for one of the twelve main disciples of Swami Ramanand in the service of his master, Raja Birsingh of Bandhavagarh of Central India, whom the saint Sena used to rub with oil every morning and shave. The Abhangas — songs of Saint Sena, the barber are very popular in Varkari or the Vaishnava cult of Pandharpur. One day the saint was going to the palace of the king and met some saints on the way. He forgot his programme and took them to his house and entertained them at his level best. After a while he was reminded of his work and hastened to the palace with necessary shaving equipments. No sooner had he entered the chamber of the king than he got up to embrace him in his arms; the unusual behaviour of the master surprised him much.

'Come, friend, this morning you gave me such comfort as I could not have throughout my whole life.' — The king addressed very humbly.

'What!' exclaimed Sena in surprise and begged to be excused for his absence.

'Who was he then?' the king was at his wit's end.

Both looked at each other. Sena fell at the feet of the king and praised his good luck for having seen the Almighty Lord in His very person. The barber renounced the world for ever and entered the discipleship of Swami Ramananda. He lived for a long time in Pandharpur and sang the glory and praise of God — Lord Panduranga. Some of his compositions were included in the *Adigranth* or *Granth Saheb* of the Sikh community. He was contemporary of Saint Jnaneshwar of Maharashtra and had a great regard for him.

* * * *

There is no end to the thinking of the attributes of God and his devotees and saints. They are really fortunate and lucky who delight in singing the glory of the Lord and praises of His holy men. God is realized only through the benediction of these saints and sages, they serve millions and millions of seekers of Eternal Light in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and nescience as true guides and are more illustrious and brighter than the sun and moon, nay, they are the very self of the Almighty Lord. It hardly needs any mention to add that even the smallest fragment of their life-events is self-sufficient and complete in itself to take thousands and thousands of pilgrims on the way to self-realisation and devotion across the ocean of mundane existence; thus the conversion of these saints from worldly life is an ever-illuminating lamp.

In most cases, the onset of this new consciousness seems to the self so sudden, so clearly imposed from without rather than developed from within, as to have a supernatural character. . . . . The apparently abrupt conversion is really, as a rule, the sequel and the result of a long period of restlessness, uncertainty, and mental stress.

(Underhill : *Mysticism*, p. 216.)

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BUDDHIST

'SATYAVRATA'

The abysmal sub-conscious mind of man, which the Hindu psychologists discovered in ancient times and the Western psychologists only at the end of the last century, is the cauldron where this spiritual upheaval styled as 'sudden conversion' originates and develops. There is something volcanic about this phenomenon. Cataclysmic changes are taking place in the bowels of the earth unknown to any man. Suddenly a quiet mountain peak blows up, spitting red-hot boulders, a fiery river of lava and dark wreathes of smoke. When the unperceived sub-conscious revolution in man comes up to the conscious mind with an explosion a sudden conversion results. The old ideas and ideals, aspirations and ambitions, which appeared 'hot and vital' to the person before this change, are shattered, and the soul gets a glimpse of something beyond and longs to be one with it. The centre of gravity of the mind is suddenly shifted from the sensuous to the super-sensuous. Sometimes this process requires an external stimulus to touch off the change, as it were. Such conversion transforms a prince into a prophet, a robber into a recluse and a monarch into a monk.

* * * *

In a sense, we can say that the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, himself was a sudden convert. We know how the prince was kept imprisoned, as it were, by his father in a pleasure garden where not the faintest shadow of misery could sneak in. To complete his bondage to the world, father Suddhodana had married him to a beautiful princess, and a son had been born to prince Siddhartha, the future Buddha. The king had heaved a sigh of relief. But it was at this time, we know, that the future Buddha ventured out to see the capital and the subjects. On this trip, as if providentially, he saw the three inevitable woes of human life, namely, old age, disease and death, and also a serene-looking mendicant in yellow garb. The monk, the chariot-driver Chan explained, had renounced the world to be of the miseries and to obtain immortal bli The prince returned to the palace deeply d tressed and resolved to renounce the pleasu of the royal life to seek the Truth for hims and for the whole humanity. We know fu ther, how he left the palace one night, stro intensely for six years and attained illumin tion under the Bo-tree at Buddha Gaya.

ANGULIMALA

The story of Angulimala (wearer of Garland of Fingers) is a typical example sudden spiritual conversion. The Buddha, ocean of mercy and love after the enlighte ment, went about preaching and teaching a gaining followers in large numbers. Dur his wanderings, he went to the city of Savat where King Pasenadi ruled. From the Je vana where he was camping, the Buddha w intrigued to see armed guards posted round the fort that surrounded the city. enquiry, he came to learn that Angulimala, fierce and ruthless robber who swooped do on the villages and cities, killing and plunde ing, had planned to raid the city on morrow. The Buddha at once saw th Angulimala needed his teaching and help a started towards his dwelling on the near hill. The earnest pleadings of his discipl could not stay his steps.

Angulimala, at the time, was rejoici within himself at the thought of the amuseme he would have the next day when he attack Savatthi and the palace of Pasenadi. He w disturbed in his reverie by the approach of stately figure, clad in yellow robes, movi towards him with the gait of a lion. T robber was enraged to think that any m should be so audacious as to approach hi in that fashion. He drew his sword and, eyes glowing with anger, rasped out: 'St monk!' The Buddha looked up and answe

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ed quietly, '*I* have stopped. It is *you* who have not!' and continued walking. Angulimala rushed towards him with the upraised sword. The Buddha, without any feeling of fear, looked him in the eyes. And lo, his sword dropped from his hand, and he stood rooted to the ground, dazed and silent. Then followed a touching conversation in which the Master's words of love and wisdom converted Angulimala completely and he followed the Blessed one as his disciple. The Buddha came back to the Jetavana with Angulimala in the yellow garb following him meekly. The disciples of the Blessed one who witnessed this breath-taking scene stood speechless. That day when Angulimala, the saint in the making, went into the town to beg his food, the people did not understand the transformation that had come over him. Some were frightened and fled their houses; still others finding him unarmed, heaved bricks and knives at him. When in the evening Angulimala returned to his Master, he was badly bruised and profusely bleeding. But inwardly he was enjoying peace and felt free from hatred. He said to the Buddha in reply to a question that he was feeling as if the great ocean of the Imperishable opened before him and that for a little while he was drawn into the peace of Nirvana. The Buddha was happy and instructed him further in the path of virtue. Angulimala, striving earnestly, in a short time found enlightenment and was numbered among the saints.

ASOKA

Asoka Vardhana, commonly called Asoka, came in the line of the illustrious Mauryan kings, as the grandson of the great Chandragupta and the son of Bindusara. He ruled over a vast empire for over forty years from B.C. 273 to B.C. 232. It was principally because of his conversion to Buddhism that Buddhism spread far and wide and became a world-faith.

The early years of his reign were uneventful. It was in the year B.C. 261, the thirteenth year of his accession to the throne, that the great event of the Kalinga war took place. He was successful in the war and the Kalinga kingdom was annexed to the empire. But the horrors which accompanied the war, even a successful war as this, made a deep impression on Asoka. He saw with his own eyes how thousands of men were slain or dead or maimed and thousands taken captive. The victorious monarch was stung with remorse. The Rock Edict XIII has recorded in imperishable words the sufferings of the vanquished and the anguish of the victor. Asoka took the vows and the yellow robes of a Bhikshu, and there was the transition from the easy-going attitude of a lay disciple to the fervent zeal of a monk. Thenceforth he seems to have assumed the names of 'Devānām-priya' (Beloved of the Gods) and 'Priya-darsin' (Dear to the sight), for in his Rock Edicts these names frequently occur.

From then on began his intensive spiritual campaign the effects of which can be felt in our country even today. He abolished the Royal Hunt and substituted pious tours, enlivened only by sermons and religious discussions, for the tours of pleasure which he had enjoyed before. He began inscribing his Rock Edicts through which he exhorted his subjects to follow Dharma and to cultivate the two essential virtues, viz., respect for the sanctity of animal life and reverence to parents, elders and superiors. In Minor Rock Edict II, the royal teaching is inscribed thus :.

> 'Thus saith His Sacred Majesty :—Father and mother must be hearkened to; similarly, respect for living creatures must be firmly established; truth must be spoken. These are the virtues of the Law of Piety (Dhamma) which must be practised. Similarly, the teacher must be reverenced by the pupil, and towards relations proper courtesy should be shown. This is the ancient nature of piety—this leads to length of days, and according to this men should act.'

Other teachings lay stress on duties of alms-giving, toleration of all denominations, abstention from evil speaking, and other virtues. One of them defines Dharma as the virtues of compassion, alms-giving, truth, purity, gentleness and godliness. His preaching was not

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confined to his own empire : bands of Buddhist missionaries were sent to other parts of India and Ceylon, to distant regions of Western Asia, Eastern Europe and Northern Africa.

Asoka ruled for over forty years with great skill and insight.

> 'We can discern a man of strong will, unwearied application, and high aims, who spared no labour in the pursuit of his ideals, possessed the mental grasp capable of forming the vast conception of missionary enterprise in three continents, and was at the same time able to control the intricate affairs of Church and State in an empire which the most powerful sovereign might envy.'

Asoka shines bright in the firmament of India's past, among the glorious kings and saints. The fragrance of his saintly life is wafted across centuries and reaches us today laden with the message of holiness, renunciation, compassion and service. It is quite in the fitness of things that the Dharma-chakra of Asoka has found the place of honour in our national flag !

SHANTI DEVA

Shanti Deva was a prince who renounced his kingdom to become a follower of the Buddha and a servant of all beings.

The exact date of his birth is not known. He lived in the seventh century A.D. He was born in Surat, in the present Saurashtra. His father, named Sila, was a king of Saurashtra. Sila was a son of the great Emperor Harsha who ruled India for forty-two years (606- to 648 A.D.). Sila inherited the greatness of Harsha to a great extent. Shanti Deva, Sila's son, on the day he was about to receive the royal consecration, saw, as in a dream, the saintly one named Manjusri,—regarded as a hero and a saint. Shanti Deva heard voice of Manjusri persuading him to renou the glory of the kingship to be a servan the poor and the humble. He obeyed voice : forthwith he renounced the palace, on the humble attire of a Bhikshu and jo the poor brotherhood. He remembered the Master, Gautama the Buddha, had left father's palace, become a wanderer in que truth, and having attained Enlightenment, become a teacher and healer of huma He took the vows of a Bhikshu and re into the forest. Nothing is known abou part of his life of seclusion and silence in forest. We next meet him on his way to university of Nalanda. There he was re rently received by students and profes alike. He seems to have remained there the end of his life. As all saints did, he ta by his precepts and practice. The overwhe ing passion of his life was to help each li being to be happier. We see him praying the happiness of all. He prayed that sufferings of beings might all come to h He has left behind two little books full ennobling teachings. 'Shiksha-samucca (Compendium of Teaching) reveals the be of spiritual life. The other 'Bodhi-char vatāra' (Introduction to the Practice of lightenment) is a fine poetical work wh sets forth some of the duties which must fulfilled by him who strives to become Bodhisattva—a true servant of humanity of all creatures.

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It is this personal aspect of a mystic's spiritual realisation which stamps it with a peculiar halo and worth. The universality, the intellectualism, the emotionalism and the moral fervour which we have hitherto talked of are but subservient to this greatest criterion, namely, a first-hand, intimate, intuitive appreciation of God.

(R. D. Ranade : *Mysticism in Maharashtra*, p. 30.)

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BUDDHIST

(*A Queen becomes a saint*)

BRAHMACHARI SARADA CHAITANYA

Mi Cao Bu or Shin Saw Bu as she is called by the people was a queen who ruled over Ramanna, the lower Burma, with her capital at Hansavatoi, the modern Pegu, during fifteenth century A.D. Though she was a queen and the only queen to rule over Burma throughout its history, she is remembered even this day not as a queen but as a saint. The people of Burma cherish in their minds the saintly career of Shin Saw Bu with love and reverence.

On 25th January, 1393, King Rajadhirat and Queen Suddhamaya of Hansavatoi were graced with a female child. And that child is Burma's famous saint Shin Saw Bu.

Shin Saw Bu spent her young days with an aunt of her father's in the neighbouring court of Dgun, the modern Rangoon. Here at Dgun she had the training in Buddhistic life and culture. When she reached the age of twelve her father's aunt, under whose affectionate care and guidance she was being trained up, passed away all on a sudden. And Shin Saw Bu came back to her parents at Hansavatoi. When she was twenty the king gave her in marriage to Smin Sethu, the Lord of Mattma or Mataban. Here in the court of Mataban she spent a happy life for five years. At the age of twenty-five she became a widow with three children. Since then misfortune befell her one after the other and her days passed through many a vicissitude till she became the queen of Hansavatoi.

After the death of her husband, Shin Saw Bu returned back to Dgun. Here at Dgun she tried to find consolation for the bereavement she suffered and wanted to spend the rest of her life in a quiet way. But the wish of the Almighty was otherwise. Soon after her arrival at Dgun King Rajadhirat passed away leaving Banna Kim, his eldest son, to rule over his kingdom. Since the death of Rajadhirat peaceful condition did not prevail throughout the country. So Shin Saw Bu thought it wise to move to Hansavatoi and stay there under the care and protection of her brother, the king. Though she moved to Hansavatoi her mind was still left behind to Dgun and occasionally she used to pay a visit to this place. Once on her way to such a visit she was kidnapped by Thihathu, the king of Ava and was made the chief of her queens. However disgusting she might have felt in such a condition Shin Saw Bu had no other alternative but to endure the decree of her fate till she got a chance to escape from the confinement at Ava. After one or two years of agony came the chance. With the help of two Brahmacharins from her native place she slipped off from Ava and reached Hansavatoi.

On arrival at Hansavatoi again she got the scope of breathing free air and living a free life under the loving care of her brother. Now onwards she engaged herself to the welfare of her subjects and to the service of monks. Thus she spent a few years of quiet life while a greater responsibility was awaiting her. Her brother passed away leaving no heir to the throne. So she had no other alternative but to step in to the place of her brother. She became the queen of Hansavatoi. So long she was a mother to the people of Hansavatoi who would look after them and pray for them. But now in her person they got a loving mother and a pious ruler boiled down as it were into one personality. Her rule gave the people peace and happiness. But for her own self providence did not allot unalloyed peace. As in early days so also while a queen she had to suffer a lot. Her days did not pass off quietly and smoothly. For during her reign she had to crush a rebellion against the throne and establish law and order in the country.

One day the queen was being carried in a palanquin to some place. While on her way she had a vision. This vision brought about

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a thorough change in her life. She renounced the throne and retired at Kyak Dgun — the Shwe Dagon of Rangoon — and spent the rest of her days in spiritual practices. The story goes like this. While so travelling an aged man appeared before her and simply uttered these words : 'Oh ! it is the old queen'; and disappeared in the twinkling of an eye — where no one could trace. The queen thought that any celestial figure might have taken the form of this old man to remind her that she was approaching death and that she should devote time in spiritual practices. So she decided to quit the throne. But in whose favour was the main problem confronting her, for there was no competent heir to the throne in whose favour she could abdicate. To solve the riddle the queen hit upon a plan. She decided to make a toss and select one of the two monks whom she used to give alms every day from her palace. One day instead of giving alms in both the bowls, she placed garments of a lay man in one of it and with the prayer for a right choice returned the bowls to them. The choice fell on Dhammaseti. Dhammaseti gave up the robe and ascended the throne of Hansavatoi. (In Burma any monk can give up the robe at time. It is not considered sacrilegious.) Dhammaseti played an important role in history of Burma. He was a man of lear and wisdom. It was he who brought ab a reorientation in the Sangha life of Bu And the famous Kalyani inscriptions of P wherein we have the story written in g how Buddhism made its way to Burma how it became the religion of the people, b the testimony of his wonderful work. H considered to be the Asoka of Burma. T abdicating the throne in favour of Dhamm the queen retired to Kyak Dgun, the S Dagon, and devoted herself to prayers meditation. While at Dgun she reconstru the then existing pagoda under her d supervision and converted it into a piece art. The famous Shwe Dagon people today is a gift of Shin Saw Bu to the poste

At the age of seventy-five Shin Saw passed away keeping her eyes fixed on S Dagon, the temple of her dream and shrine of her beloved Master — the Budd Though it is more than five centuries that passed away she is still remembered by people of Burma with pride and reverence

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HOW SRIDHARA RENOUNCED

An interesting case of suddenly renouncing the worldly life is seen in the case of Acharya Sridhara Swami. He is well known as a commentator of the Gita, Bhagavata and Vishnupurana. He has given stress on Bhakti in his interpretation of the Vedanta. Nothing definite is known about the date and place of this medieval scholar-saint.

The tradition goes that Sridhara was thinking of giving up the world and embracing the monastic life. But unfortunately, his wife died at that time, leaving a small child while giving birth to it. Sridhara was very much worried about the child and did not know what he should do. One day he sitting musing over this, when all on a sudden attention was drawn to a curious sight. The eg a lizard fell down from the roof in front of And as it broke, out came a young one. Just a small fly came near it and the young li strangely enough was immediately in action swallowed it. At this, the thought suddenly fla in the mind of Sridhara that there is a definite d plan behind creation, and every creature is prov for. Immediately, his anxiety for his child vani and he renounced the world forthwith and bec a sanyasi, wholly dedicated to God.

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MUSLIM

M. HAFIZ SYED

According to various schools of Indian thought it is admitted that there is no such thing as chance or sudden transformation. Whatever happens to an individual, here or there, is in accordance with a fixed, immutable law of cause and effect. Nothing can come to us which we have not deserved. Every effect must have its cause.

If an individual's past life and deeds are properly and accurately traced in the near or the distant future, we shall discover without surprise that whatever has happened to an individual is the result of his own action in the past, which he and others do not know. But those who have inner vision and spiritual insight, are never baffled with this problem, for they know it for certain that it is in harmony with the law and directly traceable to some cause.

There are three kinds of *dikshas,* initiation well-known by the ancient and modern spiritual-minded people :

(i) *Mantra-diksha* — through a mantra given by a Guru.

(ii) *Netra-diksha* — through a sage's look.

(iii) *Sparsha-diksha* — through a saint's touch.

Most of the Muslim saints resorted to the third category. Their mere touch transformed the lives of those whom they considered fit enough to be initiated in the mystery of divine life. The following cases, recorded in history, would bear witness to these fundamental principles, known and acknowledged all over the occult and spiritual spheres.

(1) *Mullah Nooruddin Abdur Rahman Jami* was born on 7th November 1414 A.H. in a town called Jam. His spiritual teacher was Maulana Saduddin Kashgari who was one of the exponents of Nakshbandia school of Islamic mysticism. When he was hardly five years old he came in contact with Khwaja Mohammad Parsa, who sowed the seed of spirituality in his heart.

When he came of an age and wrote *Nafahatuluns* he mentioned this incident of his life. It was in the Arabic month of *Jamadi-ul-awal* that Khwaja Mohammad Parsa was one day passing through Jam, when Jami's father placed his son in the palanquin in which Khwaja was seated. The Khwaja paid special attention to his child and gave him one seer of sugarcandy.

Jami acknowledges with deep gratitude what he owed to him from his childhood. It was the Khwaja's touch that awakened in him the true spirit of spirituality. He was educated in the traditional art and literature under the guidance of Mulla Janaid. His biographers have recorded his unusual gift of intelligence, memory and keen spiritual insight. He has left behind him altogether forty-four books of great spiritual value. He had equal command on prose and poetry. He was held in very high esteem by his contemporary mystics. He tried his best all his life to hide as far as possible his spiritual attainments. When he visited Kaba, he was greeted with great affection and reverence, by the people there.

(2) *Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti* was born in 538 A.H. Very little is known about his early education. When he was fifteen years old his father died, leaving as his legacy a garden and a *panchakki* which was the only source of his income and maintenance. Once while he was watering his garden Hazrat Ibrahim Quandozi happened to pass that way. With great reverence he welcomed him in his garden and offered him a bunch of grapes. The darvesh was so pleased with him that he took out a piece of *khil* from his pocket, cut it with his teeth and offered it to the Khwaja. Soon after taking it in he felt so much inwardly transformed, that he made up his mind to renounce the world, and sold off the garden and the

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panchakki, and distributed the sale proceeds among the poor and the needy.

(3) *Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani* in the year 488 Hijri when he came of age at eighteen was advised to proceed to Baghdad to complete his education. His mother gave her permission and escorted him as far as the first caravan station. The parting message she gave him was: Abdul Qadir, come what may, under no circumstance you should tell a lie.' He took a vow to obey his mother's admonition and went along with the caravan. After a few stoppages they were attacked by bandits. The head of these robbers was one Ahmad Alafi, a brave young man, under whose order the travellers' kits were searched. When his turn came to enquire of his belongings he unhesitatingly and fearlessly confessed that his mother at the parting time had stitched forty gold coins inside his garment. The bandits were greatly amazed at his confession which impressed them so deeply that they decided to return all that they had taken from the caravan and henceforth they resolved to clear from the evil ways and to lead a normal life of ordinary citizens. This was the first moral triumph of Abdul Qadir's spiritual life which blossomed during the course of his momentous life. This is the case of the transformation of the life of common men who were given to evil ways and this simple incident was a turning point in their life which transformed their life completely and they became good citizens.

(4) *Sheikh Fariduddin Attar's* story of his complete renunciation of worldly affairs is rather amazing. His renunciation of worldly affairs is rather touching. During his early days he owned a druggist shop where one day he was busily engaged in dispensing medicine, when a Faqir called on him and begged for some alms. The Sheikh paid no attention to him as he was too busy with his own affairs and could not reply to the mendicant who caustically remarked, 'How will you give up your life when you are so deeply engrossed your business?' The Sheikh in a pique mood retorted, 'I shall give up my ghost you would do.' The Faqir once again s 'You would not follow my way.' Hav uttered these words he laid himself down w the bowl of alms under his head and repeat the Kalema 'There is no god but Go breathed his last. This incident touch Sheikh's heart so deeply that he gave away charity all that his shop contained and fr that moment onward he lived like a Darves

(5) *Hazrat Nizamuddin* whose name w Mohammad and who was universally cal Beloved of God, King of Saints, was born Badayun in the year 634 A.H. His forefath originally came from Bokhara; first they ca to Lahore, and then migrated to Badayu Both his father and mother came from a pi and saintly family.

There is a moving story about this time his life. For want of food he had to star for several days. It was a pious and a kin hearted lady living in his neighbourhood, w brought him a handful of flour, which w being cooked in an earthen pot. Just wh this flour was ready for use a dervish visi him and asked him for some food. The Shei brought the pot of the food and placed before the dervish who satisfied his hung with a few morsels of it and threw the pot the ground and disappeared after utteri these remarks: 'Sheikh Fariduddin Ganjsh endowed you with the wealth of spiritual li and I broke into pieces the pot which was symbol of poverty. Now you have been ma the king of inner and outer life.' After th incident Sheikh Nizamuddin's indigent con tion was surprisingly changed and he began receive gifts and presents in abundance fro morning till evening from his devotees a admirers. But the Sheikh was so God-relia and contented that he used to order all th he received during the day to be distribut among the poor people and did not allow an thing to be kept overnight for the next day

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MUSLIM

N. B. CHATTERJEE

Saints have been born in every religion from time to time. Lives, activities and mysticism of some of them have been recorded, while many have passed away unknown. Saints, no matter of whatever religion or faith, serve as beacon lights to the humanity at large, not only to those who are pilgrims in the path of religion but also to those who are steeped in worldliness, creating harmony where there is dissension and a better social order by their virtues. Saints of different faiths serve as connecting links between religions in so far as they are charged with the same passionate love for God and man, evince simplicity and purity in thought and action, aversion to luxuries of life and a catholicity of spirit. According to Ibn Arabi, a sufi mystic of Spain, 'The mystic's god can neither be Muslim, nor Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, nor pagan' and the idea is beautifully brought out in his ode :[1]

My heart is capable of every form,
A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,
A pasture for gazelles, the pilgrim of ka-ba,
The Tables of the Torah, the Qoran;
Love is the faith I hold
Wherever turn his camels; still one true faith is mine.

The history of Islam contains lives of innumerable saints, the charm and beauty of whose lives and teachings have not faded with the passage of time. Those of them, who belonged to the Sufi sect, followed a path of love and devotion to God, believed that even in this life it was possible to achieve a direct realisation of God as the Beloved of the soul, to see Him, to have communion with Him and even to be one with Him. They followed a life of austerity, poverty and self-discipline, only as a means to the end of achieving that Beloved. They called themselves as 'Friends of God' (Awliyā Allāh) and practised music and devotional songs as a form of worship of God.

Some of the mystics were born devotees of God, while interesting anecdotes are connected with the sudden conversion of some of them into their lives of saintliness. It looks as if the stage had been set for them and all that was needed to kindle the fire of the love of God and renunciation was a spark which some of the anecdotes narrated here, served. Amongst Hindu saints of India, the story of the sudden conversion of Ratnakar, the robber, into saint Valmiki is well known. Tulsi Das, who, in his earlier life, was very much attached to his wife, was converted to his saintly life when once he went to meet his wife in her father's home and was sternly reproached by her with the remark—'Oh, had you but loved Rama as much as you love me!' About Ramdas, it is said that he left his own wedding platform when the priest, who was to perform the wedding, called out, 'Beware, beware', meaning thereby that the time for the wedding had arrived. About St. Anthony, a Christian saint, it is said that he once heard a sermon in the church enjoining on people who had property, to distribute the same to the poor, and this was enough for St. Anthony for bringing about a change in his mind. He sold his property, distributed his wealth to the poor and took to a life of poverty and devotion to God. Anecdotes connected with the sudden conversion of some of the Muslim saints are mentioned below.

(1) *Al Fudail,* who was born in Khurasan in the 2nd century of the Hizri era (the 8th century A.D.) was one of the most celebrated Sufi saints of the older period and a contemporary of Khalif Haroon-al-Rashid of Baghdad. In his earlier life, he was a leader of a band of robbers, operating on roads between Abiwart and Sarakhs. One day, he heard a recital from the holy Qoran,[2] 'Is it not time for those that believe, to humble their hearts before God?' On hearing this, he suddenly felt a great penitence for his past life and became converted to a life of asceticism. He

[1] Ode by Ibn Arabi — Tarjumanu'l Ashwaq.

[2] Sura — lvii — 15 — Holy Qoran.

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went to Kufa and later to Mecca, where he remained till his death.

(2) *Ibrahim-bin-Adam,* another Sufi mystic, lived in the 2nd century of the Hizri era (8th century A.D.). He was born at Balkh and was the son of the King of Khurasan. In his early life, he was indolent and given to a life of ease and luxury. One day, while he had gone out with his courtiers for hunting in Balkh, he got separated from his companions while chasing a deer. When he had entered into the heart of the forest alone following the deer, he heard the deer saying, 'Oh Adam, leave me alone, for thou art Love's chase'. These words had an electric effect in his mind. He gave up the chase and went out of the forest on his horse, far away from Balkh. Reaching a village, he alighted from his horse, exchanged his royal dress with that of a peasant and became an ascetic. Thenceforward, he lived in poverty on the work of his hands and spent his time mostly in meditation (mura-qaba) and gnosis (marifa).

One of his teachings was that a saint of God must not desire to have anything either in this world or the next, surrender himself entirely to God and live a life of poverty. Once, on hearing a person bemoaning his lot and cursing his poverty, Ibrahim-bin-Adam said to him, 'My son, perhaps you have not paid enough for your poverty. As for myself, I got it of my own free will and even bought it at the cost of worldly kingdom and my royalty. I would buy one instant of this poverty against one hundred worlds, for every moment it becomes worth more and more to me. I am grateful for this Divine gift, while you, for ignorance, curse it'.[3]

(3) *Abu Yazid Tayfur-al-Bistami* (Biyazid Bistami) was a Persian Sufi, who lived in the 9th century A.D. He belonged to Bistam. It is said that one night, Shaikh Biyazid was walking outside the city, across the open country, away from the din and bustle of the town, and the radiant moon was flooding the earth with its brilliant light. The wh atmosphere was calm and serene. Sha Biyazid was deeply moved to a state of ecst and cried out, 'Oh Lord, my heart is mo by the sight of splendour and sublimity of Court, yet I see none here to offer the ado tion, which is Thy due. How is it, my Lord He then heard the hidden voice of God, says 'O thou who art bewildered in the way, kn that the King does not grant admission every passer-by, nor is every beggar admit to his Court. The heedless and those wr ped in the sleep of indolence are repelled the radiance of the calm, splendour and glo emanating from My sanctuary; those who worthy of admittance to My court wait long years until one in a thousand of th wins entrance thereto'. He took to a life asceticism and solitude with the one desire achieving a direct realisation of God. teachings had a great influence upon development of Sufism towards a pantheis doctrine.

Biyazid Bistami's heart was moved w feelings even for animals and insects. On it is said, he purchased some seeds at place and took them with him to anot distant place. Reaching his destination found that some ants had also come al with the seeds. Seeing this, he said, 'Alas have unknowingly separated these ants fr their homes and relations'. He then trave back a few hundred miles to the place wh he had purchased the seeds to return the to their original abode. He died in the 261 A.H. (875 A.D.).

(4) *Khawaza Hasan* was born at Mec in the year 19 A.H. and lived to the old of 90 years. By profession, he was a jewe and he travelled from place to place for sel his jewels to amirs and nobles. During of his travels, he visited Constantinople dealing with the Grand Minister there. day, the Minister took him out with him show a 'strange sight'. Outside the they saw a large decorated tent with strings tied to golden pegs and draped

[3] Saints of Islam — Hussain R. Sayani.

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silk curtains. Presently, a body of armed soldiers in full uniform came there, went round the tent uttering some words in a low voice and then left the place. They were followed, one after the other, by a number of venerable old men with grey beards, the Chief Councillors of the State and a group of beautiful damsels carrying golden trays laden with jems and jewels over their heads. Each of these groups repeated the same ceremony as had been performed by the soldiers. When all had gone away, the King with his Minister came there, entered the tent, came out after a while and then left the place with tears in his eyes. Hasan was greatly surprised at this sight and asked the Grand Minister what all these meant. The Minister said, "The Emperor had a son, who was handsome and accomplished and whom his father loved very dearly. The prince suddenly fell ill and, in spite of all efforts to save his life, succumbed to his illness. The tent has been set up over his tomb for the annual ceremony in his memory in the manner just now performed. The body of soldiers uttered these words, 'O Prince, if it lay in our power to avert what befell thee, with the strength of our arms, our service was really for thee; but the strength of arms avail not against Him, by Whom thy fate was decreed'. The venerable old men similarly gave out that they offered their intercession for the revival of the Prince, if that was of any avail. The Councillors of the State also offered their craft and cunning for the recovery of the Prince while the beautiful damsels—their charm and wiles, if these could save the Prince from the cruel hands of Providence. Lastly, the King came and said, 'I would have sold my whole kingdom to save thy life, but kings are helpless against death as the poorest of the poor' and so saying he left the tent in tears". The scene enacted before Hasan's eyes and the explanation given by the Grand Minister had a great influence on Hasan's mind. He was convinced of the futility of life's glories and turned over to a life of piety and service of his fellow creatures.

Humility was his motto and he never considered himself better than any of his fellow beings. The following anecdote is told about his conversion to the state of humility. One day he saw on the banks of the Tigris, a negro on the spree with a woman in his company and a bottle of wine near him. Hasan muttered to himself, 'I am better than him, for I am neither a drunkard, nor immoral with women'. As he so thought, he saw a boat crossing the river, caught in a storm and it capsized. Its seven crews were thrown into the river and they struggled for their lives. The negro jumped into the water and saved six of them, one after another, and then turning to Hasan, he called out, 'Come along and save the seventh as thou thinkest thyself better than me. I am not a drunkard; the bottle beside me contains only water and the woman is my mother'. Hasan's pride was humbled and he never afterwards considered himself better than any of his fellow creatures.

There is another anecdote connected with the lowering of Hasan's pride. It is said that a woman once came running to Hasan, complaining of her husband's conduct towards her. Seeing that her hands and head were bare, Hasan asked her to cover herself up properly first. The woman replied, 'O Imam of the Muslims, I have so lost my senses for the love of a man, that I am not conscious of myself. Wert thou as much in love with thy Creator as I am with one of His creatures, thou would not have looked to my bare hands and head.'

The last years of Hasan's life were spent in the holy masjid at Mecca.

(5) *Bahā-Allah,* a Muslim saint of the 19th century A.D., is the founder of the religious order Bahāi, commonly known in Persian as Amar-i Baha'i (Bahai Cause). His name was originally Mirza Hussayn Ali Nuri. He was born in Teharan on Muharram 2, 1233 A.H. (12th November, 1817) of a noble family. It is said that in his childhood he once went to see a puppet show. After the show was performed with great ostentation, the puppets were kept back in their boxes. The redistribution of the puppets in the boxes

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suggested to Nuri's mind the thought of the fallibility and vanity of human power and converted him to a life of dedication to God.[4]

After the declaration of the mission of the Bāb in 1260 A.H., Nuri was one of his first disciples. In 1852, Nuri was arrested in Teharan and imprisoned in a jail known as Siyāh Cāl (Black Hole). For about a year, while in the prison, Nuri could not sleep due to the heavy chains which fastened his neck, hands and feet. One night, it is said, he heard a voice, which spoke to him, 'Truly we shall succour thee for the sake of thyself and thy pen. Be not afraid.... thou art in se rity. Soon God will raise up the treasure the earth, namely those men who shall succ thee for love of thee and thy name, by wh God shall bring to life the hearts of the sage At other times, he felt as if a great torren water was running from the top of his h to his chest like a powerful river pou itself out on the earth from the summits o lofty mountain.

Nuri was banished along with his famil Iraq after his possessions had been confisc and he then lived at Baghdad. Later, he exiled to Constantinople and then to Edi where Bahā-Allah openly declared his p phetic mission. He died in 1892 A.D.

[4] Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. I, Fas. 15, page 911.

Sudden Conversion of Saints

CHRISTIAN

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

'Jesus answered and said to Nicodemus: In all truth I tell you, unless a man is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God'.
—ST. JOHN. III. 4.

To be born anew, to be a twice-born, to be born of flesh and be re-born of the Spirit, is indeed the real conversion about which scriptures of all religions speak. Although by the term *conversion* common people understand change of one religious society for another, relabelling of persons according to professions and creeds, to the esoterics and initiates, to mystics and saints, conversion literally means a second birth, literally *dwijahood* (twice-born state), or *Metonoia,* which is the Greek word used in the New Testament to denote conversion which is the change of attitudes of mind, of values and ways of life resulting from the new birth one receives from God. Of these true converts has St. John written when he spoke of the sons of God 'who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'. (St. John. I. 13).

Christ started his ministry with a call people to 'repent of their sins and be converted'. This conversion Jesus has expla by way of various illustrations and para which leaves no room for doubt about real meaning of this word *conversion,* w is the re-birth of man in and through God the total despoliation of the entire nat features and qualities of the sense-sex-b man. Our first birth is through sex-uni our second birth is through God-union w can only take place with incontaminate pu unsullied ethical life and unshakable rock a living faith. It is this conversion of and women from worldliness to godliness sense-sex-bound world to Self-realization is the constant theme of lyrics and auto graphies of saints from East and West.

Studying the psychology of conversion can hardly find patterns of instantaneous

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versions. A few cases here and there do not overshadow the obvious fact that conversion—*dwijahood,—metanoia,* as different from cheap proselytism—takes place by degrees, often with inward upheavals, with soul-deep earthquakes and birth-pangs, with the crucifixion of flesh and mortification of the senses, with long-standing fluctuations, deliberations and uneasiness. To the outside world, a final break with the old ways and adoption of a new way of life may be startling; and may even appear as sudden conversion. But to those who have undergone that process, it is by no means instantaneous, since they alone could see and remember the long history of their conversion from sinfulness to saintliness.

Every great religion in history has its own converts, fewer in spiritual and mystical sense than in the popular proselytising sense. Asokas and Valmikis of the East are counterbalanced by Pauls and Magdalenes and Augustines from the West. Coming from different religious, national and racial melieux, these great converts have one thing in common, their sanctity, purity, holiness, a total conversion from created flux of cosmos to the uncreated bliss of the Infinite.

Restricting to Christianity alone, one finds a galaxy of such stalwart converts who adorn God's unchartered sky up above which, in one embrace enfolds the entire mankind, Christian and Hindu-Buddhist, eastern and western, ancient and modern worlds.

I. MARY MAGDALENE

One such outstanding convert whose life is closely associated with the very life of Jesus Christ is Mary Magdalene, about whom Jesus himself said: 'Many sins are forgiven her, for she has loved much' (Luke, VII. 47).

Here is a case of a public courtesan, a votary of Free Love, the princess among the Jewish hetaerae, a demimonde that reserved her harlot's profession to royal and aristocratic youths, to Herod's potentates and Roman aristocrats. Her ravishing physical beauty and charms killed many youths, not excluding her own soul. Mary Magdalene (4-45 A.D.) was born in the town of Magadhan — later on mispronounced as Magdala, — and from her very early youth she abandoned herself to the lusts and sins of sex until after decades of dissipation she fell seriously ill, abandoned by all as an outworn moral leper. Mary of Magdala was sunk into the deep abyss of mental darkness, moral filth and spiritual death. Such was her state of moral degradation and spiritual disease that the Gospel simply describes her as:

> 'A certain woman who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary who is called Magdalene, out of whom seven devils had gone forth'. (Luke, VIII. 2.)

Devils and evil spirits in the Judeo-Christian religions roughly correspond to *Mara* in Buddhism, the tempter, the seducer and killer of souls, and to *Iblis* and *Shaitan* in the Semitic religions, notably in Islam. Sins and vices could bring a man into such a state that he becomes the abode and pastureland of devils. 'Infirmities' of Mary Magdalene referred to in the Gospels are both spiritual and physical; and Jesus, through his saving grace, saved Magdalene from all her 'infirmities and seven devils'.

Magdalene, while plunged into misery and was on the verge of committing suicide, recalled the redemptive ministry of the young Messaiah, Jesus of Nazareth 'who went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and *healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity* among the people'.

The Gospel continues:

> 'And the fame of Jesus went throughout all Syria, and they presented to him all sick people that were taken with diverse diseases and torments and such as were possessed by devils and lunatics and those that had the palsy, and he cured them all'. (Mathew, IV. 23 & 24.)

For the sick and ailing Magdalene now appears an incomparable physician. To sinful and vicious Magdalene there appeared the redeeming prophet. To dying and despondent

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Magdalene there appeared the all-vivifying God.

Jesus needed no history of her life; no diagnostic tests to find out the state of her soul. A look was just enough. As was his wont, Jesus might have said to her: 'Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee, arise, go in peace, sin no more, lest something worse might befall thee.' Corresponding to the saving grace of Jesus was that irrevocable resolve of Magdalene to become pure and serve God and God alone in His creatures. Magdalene became one of the closest associates of Jesus, a rotten public prostitute turned into one of the most amiable saints of all times. The long-drawn agony of her soul and despair vanished at the magic touch of the Saviour, a touch that brings about second birth, complete metamorphosis of the sinner into saint, more truly than the touch of the philosopher's stone that alchemists believed would change metal into gold.

There is one most touching scene of Magdalene the convert that is described so vividly in the synoptic gospels. Here is that episode:

> 'And one of the Pharisees desired Jesus to eat with him, and he went to the house of the Pharisee and sat down to dine. And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that he had sat to dine in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment. And standing behind at his feet, she began to wash his feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment'. (Luke, VII. 36 & seq.)

Those who witnessed that scene took it ill, wondering how Jesus could let the 'sinner' touch his feet. But that was a touch of a convert saint, who washed the feet of the Saviour with tears of love, repentance and gratitude. Artists and psychologists have described the inner meaning of this episode in the life of Mary Magdalene who to this day and for ever will remain a shining pattern of the repentance and spiritual catharsis for millions of girls and women who go astray, caught up in the tentacles of sex, but, who, responding to the call of Heaven and the grace of God, are prepared to follow her in the path of conversion, full-fledged love of God and man.

II. ST. PAUL

Second among stalwart converts in Christian skies stands out St. Paul of Ta (2-68 A.D.), a Jew by race, a Greek by ture and a Roman by citizenship, who fro fierce persecutor of Christ was converted the most ardent and most influential ap of Christ and propagandist of Christia Here is the incident of the sudden and u pected conversion of Paul.

> 'Saul (the Jewish name for Paul), as yet be ing out threatenings and slaughter against the ciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, asked of him letters to Damascus, to the gogues, that if he found any men or wome his way, he might bring them bound to Jeru As he went on his journey, it came to pass he drew nigh to Damascus. And suddenly a from heaven shined round about him. And fa on the ground, he heard a voice saying: "S Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul s "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He: "I am J whom thou persecutest. It is hard for the kick against the goad". And he, trembling astonished, said: "Lord, what will thou me to do?" And the Lord said to him: "A and go into the city, and there it shall be thee what thou must do." Now, the men went in company with him stood amazed, he indeed a voice, but seeing no man. And rose from the ground, and when his eyes opened, he saw nothing. But they, leading by hands, brought him to Damascus. An was there three days without sight; and he neither eat nor drink'. (Acts, IX. 3-9.)

Here is an account of sudden conversio a fierce opponent and persecutor of Ch who, on his way to bind, burn and kill Ch tians was converted to the saving grace Christ. Unlike in the case of Mary M dalene, here is a case of conversion of a from narrow sectarian religious bigotry the universality of the Gospel of Christ. F now on, Paul will go all over the then kn world, through the length and breadth of Roman Empire spreading the knowledge gospel of Jesus Christ. The hardships, su ings and agonies which Paul underwent for sake of Christ and his kingdom are so m and so great, that the propagandistic zeal

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enthusiasm of Paul continue to be the inspiration for millions of evangelists of the Church throughout the ages.

The main features of the unexpected and dramatic conversion of Paul are the following :

(1) His faith that Jesus is the *Logos*, the Word of God incarnated as man to teach mankind the way to salvation. St. Paul's faith is not merely a belief in statements, but a 'faith that works out through charity' (love of God and man), as he says. It was the unfolding of the mystery of the redemptive incarnation of Jesus that constituted the gospel he preached, not a book-learnt or a man-taught doctrine. Paul himself says :

> 'The gospel which I preached to you is not according to man, for neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ'. (Gal., I. 11-12.)

Paul had ecstatic vision of God, one of which he describes vividly in his epistle when he was 'caught up into paradise and heard secret words which is not granted to man to utter' (II. Cor. XII. 4). It is this ecstasy, this *nirvikalpa samadhi* that gave such unshakable certainty of things divine to Paul during his stormy life.

(2) As a result of his conversion Paul experienced and expressed the irreconcilable hostility between body and spirit, virtue and sin, the Mosaic Law and divine Grace, the letter and the spirit of scriptures. Life, to Paul, meant a continuous battle, warfare between the bodily pull to worldly and sensual things and the urge of the human spirit towards God-union, things celestial. We have to win the battle and win the palm of race through the mortification of the senses and worldly things, and the subsequent triumph of the spirit over matter. Says Paul :

> 'I say then : Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit ; and the spirit against the flesh. For these are clean contrary one to another, so that you do not the things that you would. If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are : fornication, uncleanliness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissension, sects, envies, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such likes. As I foretold you, I tell you now that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God'. (Gal., V. 16-21.)

There is a necessary link between cause and effect, between sin and misery, virtue and happiness. In India this law of cause and effect is known as the law of *Karma*. Says St. Paul :

> 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall he reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit he shall reap life everlasting'. (Gal., V. 7 & 8.)

One Indian sage of twentieth century who resembles Paul in that propagandistic zeal and enthusiasm for his master is Swami Vivekananda whom I have always considered as the Paul of the Ramakrishna Mission Movement by trying to bridge the gulf between various religions and linking up the East and the West on the rock of God.

III. ST. AUGUSTINE

The story of the conversion of St. Augustine is read throughout the ages by Christians and non-Christians alike by reading his world classic : *Confessions*, which is at once a mine of religious experience of conversion, mysticism, depth-psychology, ontology, metaphysics and history. St. Augustine represents the type of converts who had both the moral and intellectual lapses and became miserable thereby ; but they managed to catch hold of the raft of salvation through their new life, the life of a God-guided life.

St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) was an intellectual genius of the first order from his school-days at Tagaste, Madaura and Carthage.

It was in the city of Carthage, noted for much wealth, learning and also pagan immoralities, that Augustine fell into sins and vices of the flesh, those sexual aberrations which drag many a promising youth to the abyss of moral filth and degradations in big cities everywhere, all times. Already at the age of eighteen, as a result of his illegitimate connections with a

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girl, to Augustine was born a son in the year 372, whom he called : 'the son of my sin', and *Adeodatus*, which means 'given by God'. While Augustine continued in his sinful life, his son Adeodatus grew up into a saintly boy who died in the odour of sanctity at that very age of eighteen when Augustine gave birth to him.

Teens and twenties passed by, and it was at his thirty-third year that grace of God effectively worked out the conversion of Augustine from sinfulness to saintliness, from sensual passions to the calm cool light of Divine Love. Augustine the thinker, the writer, the philosopher, the professor and the king of literature among the writers of his times, is struck with remorse and pangs of conscience for his sins, thanks to the constant warnings and loving care of his saintly mother Monica, thanks also to the saintly influence of St. Ambrose, the bishop of Milan.

The crowning success of decades of sinful living and the subsequent dichotomy of the soul came when one day, struck by the radiant light of God, Augustine fell aground in a garden in Milan and wept bitterly over his sins, determined to break the yoke of passions and lusts and lead a God-guided and Christ-like life. Then he heard the voice of a child telling him : 'Take and read'. Augustine, with trembling hands, took his Bible and opened, when his eyes fell upon these words of St. Paul :

> 'The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ : and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences'. (Rom., XIII. 12-14.)

Such was the deep and lasting impression and conversion that took place in the soul of Augustine by this scriptural reading that he, giving up all worldly entanglements, became a monk, vowed down to the essential monastic vows of voluntary poverty, which detaches one's mind and heart from the earthly possessions, chastity which bids good-bye to all sensual and sexual life, and obedience to the la and commandments and guidance of G Conversion in a great mind brings abou chain reaction which leads many to the p of conversion, leading many worldly-mind to God, as the locomotive engine carries m wagon-loads to the terminus.

Augustine founded a new monastic comm nity of monks with total dedication to t search of Truth and a God-guided way of l Besides being the patriarch of western mona cism, Augustine stands out as one of the m brilliant philosopher, theologian and psych gist of all times. His voluminous writings a even today as fresh as when they were writ an effusion of a theocentric heart, an overf of a mind that was so deeply saturated w the knowledge of God and man. The San krit : *Atmanam Viddhi ; Devam Vijijnasas* — know thy own self ; know God, finds echo in the Augustinian dictum : *Noverim n noverim te* — May I know my own self, m I know Thee, my God.

Scholars and savants, psychologists a psychotherapists, philosophers and theologia saints and sinners of both the East and t West find in Augustine a supreme pattern learning and holiness. Such is the huma and spiritual influence of Augustine that he universally respected and loved by all think of both the hemispheres of our earthly plan

IV. ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226 A.D.), recording the anecdotes and incidents in t conversion-psychology of great Christian co verts, stands out as the nearest model th appeals most to an Indian mind. Francis Assisi is a *Bhakti Yogin* par excellence, exponent of divine love of the same school thought to which Bhaktas like Chaitany Kabir, Tulsi Das, Mira, Tukaram and othe in India belonged.

Francis of Assisi, born of wealthy parent in the town of Assisi — where the prese writer spent some of the most memorable da of his life during the seven years' stay in It

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—soon got addicted to the sins which are inseparable from gold. Gold and sex, the famous *Kamini-kanchan* of Sri Ramakrishna, constitute the essence of worldliness, which blinding us to the supra-sensual and supra-mental realities, binds and drags us down to the things of the earth. Francis very soon became the leader of the Assisian revellers and 'teddy boys'. Besides the riotous revelry, Francis joined the local army and fought in a battle against the Perugians. Francis was captured a prisoner in the neighbouring town of Perugia where he fell ill. Misfortunes, one after another, began to knock at his door which made him more and more introspective and self-knowing.

Francis had his fluctuations between worldliness and godliness for a few years, until in the year 1206 he was finally converted to God. He felt miserable inwardly. There was an inner vacuum which Francis discovered could not be filled up with either gold or sex-love. That infinite void in him Francis could fill up only with God, giving up all gold and lusts, *kamini-kanchan*, in its entirety.

During one of his military expeditions as a cavalier, Francis was journeying to Apulia. But when he reached Spoletto, in central Italy, he fell ill, which brought back his old remorses of conscience to such a pitch that he fell unconscious—unconscious to the world outside, but widely awake to the inner soul-world. Then he heard the inner Voice, Witness telling him, questioning him :

'Francis, who of the two can confer better good, the master or the servant, the rich or the poor ?'

Francis : 'The Master and the rich person.'

Voice : 'Leaving, then, God who alone is rich and Master, why do you run after man who is only the servant and pauper ?'

Francis : 'Most true. O God, my Lord, what willest me to do ?'

Voice : 'Go you back to your own native city of Assisi, and there it shall be told what you should do. This vision has but a spiritual meaning. It is not from men, but from God, and Thou shalt receive its fulfilment in due course.'

The vision ceased ; the Voice stopped speaking. But Francis was already hit with the rays of God that would convert him finally to God. In Assisi, in February 1209, Francis was praying in the Church of St. Damien, when he heard the priest reading these words :

> 'Everywhere on your road preach and say—The Kingdom of God is at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out devils. Freely you have received, freely you give. Carry neither gold nor silver, nor money in your girdles, nor bag, nor two coats, nor sandals, nor staff, for the workman is worthy of his hire'. (Mathew, X. 7-10.)

These words of Jesus sank deep into the heart of Francis. These words gave the mode of life which Francis thereupon adopted for the rest of his life, a life of utter poverty, angelic chastity and a gay, peaceful and God-guided manner of life which later on enabled him to sing :

> 'Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace !
> Where there is hatred, let me sow Love,
> Where there is injury, let me sow Pardon :
> Where there is doubt, let me sow Faith !
> Where there is despair, let me sow Hope :
> Where there is sadness, let me sow Joy !
>
> 'O Divine Master ! grant that I may not seek
> So much to be consoled as to console ;
> So much to be understood as to understand,
> So much to be loved as to love.
> For it is in giving that we receive ;
> It is in pardoning that we are pardoned ;
> It is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life'.

This psalm of life of Francis of Assisi epitomizes his life, a song that is the soothing balm and saving leaven in this fear-haunted, hatred-ridden and war-smitten humanity.

Conversion-psychology, in its essentials, boils down to a thorough catharsis of the mind and heart from the sense-bound worldly ways and sexual lusts to the infinite freedom and ineffable joy of the Spirit within man. If 'religion is the manifestation of the Divinity

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already in man', as said the great Swami Vivekananda — himself a convert from materialism and vanity to God and godly life, thanks to the magic touch of Sri Ramakrishna, his Master, — then conversion is the discovery of, and living by godliness already latent in man.

Our passions and lusts, gold and wealth, friends and relatives, all put clouds and barriers between our own selves and Reality. These obstacles are removed one by one through conversion, sometimes abruptly instantaneously as in the case of St. Paul, slowly and by degrees as in the case of Fr of Assisi, St. Augustine and others. Bu salutary fruits derived from such converts always the self-same, viz. sanctification souls, salvation of the unredeemed man welfare of the world, an ideal so tersely clearly conveyed by Vivekananda in *Atmano Mokshārtham, jagat hitāya cha.*

Sudden Conversion of Saints

CHRISTIAN

(Some decisive Conversions in the Lives of well-known Christian Mystics and Saints)

WOLFRAM H. KOCH

THE BLESSED ANTONY, THE DESERT-FATHER

In the 3rd century there happened in an Egyptian church an apparently very commonplace and unimportant event, which, however, had the most far-reaching consequences in the development of Western hermit life and monasticism. During divine service the well-known story of the rich young man who wanted to follow Christ and turned away sad at heart, because he was unable to obey His command, had been read many, many times, only giving the devout listeners a kind of superficial satisfaction and a rather smug feeling of pleasant edification; for the deeper significance of the words of the Scriptures and saints often hide themselves, as it were, behind certain peaceful readings, until some day, quite unexpectedly, their strange power suddenly comes to life and brings about an unthought of revolution in the life and daily conduct of some hitherto just as smug and unthinking listener.

In the life of the Blessed Antony this in itself quite ordinary event — the reading of an often repeated passage of the Gospel during divine service — lead to an extraordinary consequence, because he — another rich young man — happened to be present in the church that day. He listened with his whole atten riveted to the words, and it seemed to that they were spoken to him alone and been chosen for his sake, so that he m grasp their full intention and put it in pra forthwith. He felt that they were, ind meant for him far more than for the o people filling the church, who had prob heard them as many times as he had be that day. To him, he was the rich young come back! And he suddenly realised only a word from the Bible which a man re applied to his own life and thought and ac could produce the required germinative po to bring about a true change and create great and strong an impression in the life that the day and the hour he heard it bec decisive for the rest of his life.

Jesus' answer to the rich young man — thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou and give to the poor, and thou shalt have sure in heaven: and come and follow me at first threw Antony into a deep and pa restlessness that brought about in him beginning of a lasting spiritual awaken This challenge of the Gospel which to people remained utterly sterile, no matter often it was dinned into their ears, some

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to be listened to with pleasant smugness, but never to be actually followed or to be taken seriously, produced in Antony an inner revolution that reached far down into the very roots of his whole being and made him wonder whether all his life up to that day had been nothing but a delusion and an error, unworthy of a true man. He saw himself as a second young man, for he, too, possessed great wealth. The situation, however, did not prove to be a mere repetition of the story of the Gospel, but Antony was a very different rich young man with different tendencies, different attachments, — sincere, quick and energetic in his decisions. So he did not even wait for the end of divine service, but felt he had to act without any further delay. He left the church trembling with excitement, quite unable to control himself any longer. It seems that his case has remained the only one in which the story of the rich young man had been taken so seriously, leading straight to the ultimate consequences without further hesitation. In the Gospel the rich young man goes away sad at heart, but unwilling or too weak to follow Christ's advice. In Antony's case it was just the opposite ; for in him the story produced the instantaneous realisation of its truth and forced him to go and change his whole life.

Antony was a Copt, born of Christian parents in Upper Egypt in 250. He had always been of an easily moved and receptive heart. He was an introverted boy, rarely played with comrades of his own age, and intentionally kept himself aloof from them. After his parents' death he administered the inherited landed property, which made him a very rich young man, at the same time causing him a lot of trouble and work. In the midst of such a situation the message of the Sermon on the Mount with its 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Behold the fowls in the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them' — exerted a great influence on him and created the condition which made such a sudden crisis and conversion possible and fruitful. The words he heard in the church caused a tremendous intensification of his emotional stress. The condition Christ named for attaining perfection was the selling of everything one had and giving it to the poor. And Antony was not at all prepared to take these words only in a symbolical or spiritual sense or in any way to try to dilute their meaning and making it innocuous from a worldly point of view. He was too sincere for such juggling with holy words. He did not want any clever interpretation of them. Christ's advice stood before him as an inexorable challenge, which had either to be followed or rejected, but which could never be distorted and twisted into any other more moderate and comfortable meaning. So he began giving away his landed property to the inhabitants of his home-town, sold his remaining possessions giving the proceeds to the poor, and only keeping a small sum for his young sister who was still a minor. He was fully convinced that no perfection and no truly religious life were possible if a man was unwilling to accept Christ's words in their full import and did not make a radical change in his life after listening to them and give up everything he clung to with all the fibres of his being. The man who was and remained divided between mammon and God could never be able to attain perfection or to become a true follower of Christ. And if the young man mentioned in the Gospel went away sad at heart without having the strength of accepting Christ's advice, Antony, on the contrary, was unconditionally ready to take up the challenge like a hero, and thus to become another rich young man through whom Christ's advice found its fulfilment, thereby becoming with Origen and Athanasius one of the most influential Christians Egypt has produced. He was to bring an entirely new element into the Christianity of his time, which was not to be found before his conversion. Antony became one of the great ascetics among the numbers of the Desert Fathers, that heroic band of athletae Dei, athletes of God, — living his

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whole later life in accordance with Timothy's words — 'Take heed unto thyself, and them that hear thee.' Without him, the great ascetic movement of the Desert Fathers would never have attained its wonderful development and height and never have produced such a number of saintly lives and deeply contemplative men whose sole striving was unconditionally directed towards the full realisation of Christ's words and doctrine as they understood it. 'Take heed unto thyself' became the principal command every true Christian had to follow.

For Antony everything had to be done 'today', again and again today. There was no past for a true follower of Christ, because asceticism, to him, must daily begin anew, according to the words of Elijah — 'As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him today'.

With this kind of ascetic work Antony has begun the tremendous theme which can be traced through the whole history of Western hermit life and monasticism and has so often attained a really astonishing extent, in spite of the ordinary man seeing nothing in it but a sterile and quite unnecessary decadent form of self-torture brought about by a repellent and pathological state of mind and a strong tendency towards masochism.

Through his example Antony, without ever having had any children of his own, became the father of a limitless progeny. He realised that Christianity in its deepest form can never be really thought of without the true monk or nun and without some form of asceticism and renunciation and non-attachment. And there is no doubt that these are inseparable from the great message Christ proclaimed to the world and to all who sincerely wished to follow His footsteps and to attain His truth.

Antony was buried in 356. Before his death he said to two of his disciples — 'Shelter in the ground, hide in the earth the body of your father, and do your old man's bidding in this also that no one but your love shall know the place of my grave. The sheepskin and the old cloak I am lying on give to Athanasius the bishop, he brought it to me new. Let Serapion the bishop have the other sheepskin. Do you take my haircloth, and farewell you that are my heartstrings; for Antony is going, and will not be with you in this world any more.'

Antony's life was a wonderful example of unshakable steadfastness and one-pointedness and heroic sincerity, scarcely found in a man. In the eyes of many it was abhorrent, a life of error and frustration, stultifying everything that might be considered human and healthy and yet his ways may have been nearer to Christ's teachings and their unadulterated inner meaning than the lives of many later Christians who, though lacking his heroic resolution and self-abnegation, believed themselves to be true and sincere and upright followers of Christ and the Gospels.

For more than a century after Antony's passing away men were flocking for religion to the desert and its many cells and hermitages and monasteries. In fact, there were thousands and thousands of men and women followed the monastic and hermit life in the desolate wastes of Northern Africa. To them all human passions, but chiefly the passions of men, anger and lust, had to be dug out by the very roots as they blinded the human heart and entangled man more and more in the delusive meshes, till he was utterly unable to see the light and to lead a truly religious life as the child of Christ, the child of God.

BASILIUS THE GREAT

Basilius the Great belonged to a wealthy, highly respected, Cappadocian family. His mother Emmelia was the daughter of a Christian martyr. She, his extremely intellectual father and his grandmother Makrina, who had gladly suffered herself to be exiled because of her faith, showered infinite love on him in his childhood and did all they could to help him in every possible way. This highly cultured environment of his childhood and youth made itself felt during his entire later life. It was also the reason why he always turned against all those who despised learning and education and why he believed philosophy when gi

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its right place to be a radiant reflection of the Divine Light, which he tried to follow.

During the time of his studies in Athens Basilius came under the negative influence of Greek life and customs, and Greek philosophy made of the young man a self-satisfied, stuck-up person, who put himself far above others and despised their simplicity and ignorance. In the biography of his sister Makrina his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, says that Basilius was mightily puffed up, full of intellectual pride, despised all authorities and thought himself in his arrogance to be above even illustrious lords and rulers.

This arrogant conduct of Basilius after his return from his university studies in Athens was in serious opposition to the sincere unassuming piety of his sister Makrina. She felt his boastful manners to be nothing but sheer swagger and foolishness, and this led to an earnest discussion between the two, which took a different turn for Basilius than he had expected, and brought about his conversion. The young rhetorician was not able to hold his ground against Makrina. She mercilessly destroyed his vain arrogance, and succeeded in deeply affecting his desire to dominate others and to show off. The self-satisfied young man suffered a serious breakdown, which had a most healthy effect on his whole later spiritual development.

This crisis has been described by Basilius himself in one of his letters. He says — 'I spent much time in vanity and wasted almost my whole youth in the futile effort to attain the knowledge of that wisdom which has been declared by God to be utterly vain. But finally, I awakened as from a deep slumber, turned my eyes towards the marvellous light of the truth of the Gospel, saw through the worthlessness of the wisdom of the earthly great, who become as nothing, cried much over my pitiable life and asked for the grace to be guided and introduced into the religious truths. Above all, however, I took care to change my conduct for the better, which had become wrong through my relations with bad people.'

This document about a misspent youth deserves all our attention. Basilius' awakening from his thoughtless paltriness as it appeared to him henceforth must have been terrible. His conversation with his saintly sister caused a deep inner shock, which in its turn influenced his whole later life and made him the great and energetic personality and reformer of the monasticism of the Eastern Church. Its first effect was that he gave up his rhetorical profession, although he was not yet certain what direction his life would take. But after his conversion he had learnt to go to the very marrow of things, and no longer remained on their glittering and sparkling surface and outward appearance.

Finally Basilius decided to visit many different monasteries in different countries, — a really strange wish and enterprise in so young a man, who did not do so in order to see interesting sights or discover old interesting manuscripts or valuable objects of art in a spirit of adventure, but who was intent on discovering the best means to a really Christian life and realisation, and to give a new direction to his whole life, that, to him, seemed to have hopelessly run aground on the waste-lands of mere intellectual knowledge and worldly pride.

He went to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, knocking at many doors of monasteries, no longer believing himself to be too great and too wise and cultured to sit with ignorant monks in solitary cells and to be taught by them the real practice of Christianity. His arrogance had completely given way to true humility.

At the age of 28 Basilius came back from his journeyings — a changed man with the realisation that the Christian way must lead inwards, and that true Christianity was not to be found in intellectual treatises and discussions, but only in inner realities by strictly following the words of Christ as they were found in the Bible. The 'uncultured' monks with their inward-turned lives, their unceasing self-control, inexorable daily work on themselves, their unconditional self-abnegating surrender to the divine will, showed him the way, which he, too, would have to follow. Without

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this journey to the monasteries he would never have become the powerful man who was able to defy the imperial prefect, saying — 'Apparently you have never seen a bishop!'

Basilius gave a new soul and a new direction to the prevailing coenobitism of his day. He did not fully approve of the anchoretic way of life of the Desert Fathers, which, to him, seemed in many ways to stand in direct opposition to the true way of Christ, inasmuch it cut itself away from its neighbour, whom we were to love as ourselves. He wanted a community life in a small monastery with a strictly limited number of monks leading an intense inner life that, at the same time, cared and looked after their fellow-men, neither cutting itself wholly away from the world — as the hermits in the desert did — nor allowing itself to be influenced by all sorts of worldly currents and anxieties, which he believed to be the great danger of large monasteries with a great number of monks.

He created a new rule, which was to have a lasting influence on later monasticism in the Eastern Church, and put at the head of it the love of God as the primary task of every monk, though being fully aware that real love of God can never be taught to anybody. He also made it the business of his monks to penetrate deeply into the secrets and mysteries of Christianity and spiritual life and to make them their very own, hereby creating a till then unknown type of man: the cultured, well-educated, well-read Christian monk.

His whole life Basilius wanted to overcome the contrast between Greek and Christian thought, between Athens and Jerusalem, because, to him, Athens represented culture and education, Jerusalem religion and spirituality, and both had to be combined in the life of a true monk and Christian. Together with his friend, Gregory of Nazianz, and his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, he brought about the defeat of Arianism, even going so far as courageously to oppose the emperor Modestus, who menaced him with the confiscation of his possessions, exile, torture and death. Basilius' answer to such a menace was typical of his whole being. 'Is that all?' — he sai 'Nothing of all this applies to me. The sessions of him who does not possess anyt cannot be confiscated. You would but re my ragged and shabby clothes and my books, of which my whole wealth consists do not know any exile; for I am everywh at home on God's wide earth. Torture not harm me; for my body is perishable how. But death is welcome, as it takes more quickly to God. Besides, the gre part of myself is dead already, as I have hurrying towards the grave for a long tim

Basilius the Great died in his 49th on New Year's Day 379 of a chronic liver-c plaint. His contemporaries were so impr ed by his towering personality that they him the name the Great, a name rarely to clerical figures. He fully merited that n He was great and the work which through sprang into existence was still greater.

After his passing away Gregory of Naz and Gregory of Nyssa wrote long and w panegyrics on his life, which, however, r prevent the modern reader from a true ap ciation of his importance because of somewhat fulsome and extravagant rheto

ST. CATHERINE OF GENOA

St. Catherine of Genoa was born in 1 Her parents married her at the early ag 16 to Giuliano Adorno, a Genoese libe who treated her most cruelly, always run after other women and never-ending se pleasures. This made her throw herself all sorts of amusements and adventures, she found herself steeped in 'sin' with however, being able to discover any mea turn over a new page. Thus she becam helpless slave to her own worldly inclinati as so many do, even those who seem very devout and practising religion.

She was left without hope, and finally even went so far as to pride herself on sin and deride others who were trying to a better sort of life. By that time her interest was centred on worldly things attractions, often of a very low kind, and

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thing spiritual or smacking ever so slightly of religion seemed to her detestable and to be avoided at any cost. In spite of all this, there came a day when these pleasures began to pall on her and to lose their charm. It was a very bitter day for her as she did not see any way out and felt as if she had become utterly helpless, nothing but so much flotsam and jetsam mercilessly tossed by the waves of unappeasable worldly longing and desires and driven on and on by the habits she herself had created, without having the power of giving her life any other direction.

At the instance of her sister, who was a nun and later became St. Limbania, she went to make her confession to the confessor of their convent, who was a very saintly man, on the day of the feast of St. Benedict (22nd March, 1473), but she found herself not disposed to do it. So her sister asked her at least to go and to recommend herself to him. This she did, but scarcely had she knelt down, when she had such a clear vision of her misery and all her faults that she almost fell on the ground unconscious. Her ears were suddenly filled with the bubbling and rushing and crashing of a mighty flowing river. She wanted to cry, but could not, to speak and was prevented from speaking, to confess all her sins and guilt, but found herself unable to utter a single word, because every word she wanted to speak died soundlessly on her lips. That day she did not succeed in making her confession and had to postpone it. But when she returned home, she had a wonderful though painful vision :—Jesus Christ with the cross on his shoulder came into her room as a silent guest, 'raining blood so profusely that the whole house seemed to be full of it.' Catherine threw herself down on her knee crying :—'O Lord, never again, never again! No more world! No more sin!' And in that moment, even had she possessed thousands of worlds, she would have thrown them all away.

She went back home, kindled and deeply wounded with so great a love of God and of His infinite goodness and purity, which had been shown her inwardly, with the sight of her own wretchedness, that she seemed utterly beside herself. And she shut herself in a room, the most secluded she could find, with burning sighs. And in this moment she was inwardly taught the whole practice of prayer; but her tongue could say nothing but this : 'O Love, can it be that Thou hast called me with so great a love, and made me to know in one instant that which worlds cannot express?'

After that she was afflicted during a whole year with the painful vision of her sins. Then, as if the Lord had suddenly burnt them in the fire of his infinite love, she never saw them again, not the tiniest spark of them even, as if they had been swallowed up by the most unfathomable depths of the sea. Then a new life of great and wonderful saintliness began to unfold itself to her, steadily growing in perfection till the day of her death.

She passed away in September 1510, after having spent the rest of her life in the service of her fellow-men and written a number of mystical treatises, talks and dialogues that are still being read and can still be read with considerable profit even in our day.

ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Saint Ignatius—Inigo de Recalde de Onaz y Loyola—tells us in his autobiography : 'Up to the age of 26 he was a man given to the vanities of the world, and his greatest delight consisted in the management of arms, driven by a strong desire to acquire great fame. In fact, finding himself in a fortress attacked by the French, and all being of opinion that they should surrender and save their lives, defence being clearly impossible, he brought forward so many and such grave reasons that he induced the governor to continue the defence, against the opinion of all the knights, who took heart from his courage and his intrepidity. On the day the bombardment was expected, he confessed himself to one of his comrades in arms; and after the cannons had been shelling the fortress for a long time, a ball hit him in one leg, smashing it, and, as it passed between the two legs, it also wounded the other one.'

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This event was the beginning of the great change or conversion that took place in the young Inigo de Loyola's heart. For he had not only been interested in the management of arms and the acquisition of great glory, but still more so in the conquering of women and all sorts of amorous adventures, which flattered his vanity and gave plenty of food to the cravings of his strong sensuality among the beauties he met. To him, at that time, it was of no importance whatever whether the lady in question belonged to the highest aristocratic circles of the Spanish court or was an ignorant, primitive servant-girl or peasant.

We should not overlook a certain similarity between Inigo de Loyola and Don Quixote; for his nature was more like that of an idealistic knight-errant of God than that of the sober, well-balanced, reasonable psychologist many people believe him to have been. The Spanish soul is far more quixotic than rationalistic or well-balanced, and Inigo de Loyola was a true Spaniard and a true Basque, which is too easily misunderstood by many of his admirers and antagonists.

After his recovery Inigo de Loyola left the castle of his fathers without telling his relations —a cripple for life. He allowed his mule the choice of the roads, following the example of Don Quixote in this also, although he seems to have been full of zeal to perform great deeds out of love for God in spite of his conversion being still in its very first beginnings, in the first throes of childhood, as it were. But he discovered that it is not an easy thing to become from a frivolous, vain, adventurous, sensual lover of women a pure and consecrated knight of Christ.

Finally his road led him to Montserrat, the great sanctuary of Spanish Christianity. There he made a general confession to the Benedictine monks of the monastery, gave away his mule, put off his knightly dress, hung up his sword at the altar of Our Lady's Church and passed the whole night before the miraculous image of Our Lady,—the only woman he intended henceforth to adore and to serve.

The next day he put on a dress of coarse sackcloth, took a staff in his hand and slu gourd-flask over his shoulders. This, howe was not an empty caprice on his part, bu truly symbolic action; for it was on Montse in the Benedictine monastery that took pl the final rupture with his whole former lif the world. From that day on Inigo de Lo never retraced his steps. Montserrat became an important station on his There he began his new life as a relig penitent, though apparently without having any vision or spiritual experiences. The greatness of his life, however, began only Manresa, because at Manresa there happe that overwhelming religious break-thro which made him finally and once for all self, enabling him to become the great fou of his powerful religious order.

Inigo de Loyola himself used to answer questions about his later life by referring the little town of Manresa as the key to ev thing that followed. There he got into forge of God wherein he was mercile hammered into his later shape. It was th that he felt with tremendous power the rel less impact of divine and evil tendencies the battlefield of his soul.

During this period he abstained from and wine, whipped himself three times a d wore an iron chain round his body, slept the bare ground, no longer pared his nails combed his hair, which gave him a very re sive appearance. There was no trace lef the former gallant knight courting beau women and feeling proud of his looks. was tortured by innumerable consta changing temptations and pangs of conscie and stung with deep remorse. It seemed if all the powers of darkness and evil hith hidden in his soul were bearing down on and trying to destroy him. He was bro to the very brink of despair, until his gre temptation became that of suicide, calling question his very existence, and making doubt the sense of everything he thou believed and did.

A great help during this period of terrif scruples and depression was Thomas a Ke

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Imitation of Christ. In fact, no other book or advice seems to have helped Inigo de Loyola so much in his reorienting himself and in his ceaseless spiritual struggles and later development as the quiet and moderate ideas expressed in that book. To him, the *Imitation of Christ* became an illumination, and he always carried the book with him wherever he went, reading it again and again. From its pages he more and more gained the insight that all true striving after holiness consists in a process of inner cleansing and not in mere outward physical mortification and hardship. He realised that the soul needs purification, not the body torture and extreme austerity. Thus he slowly began to follow the road that leads to a complete change and renewal of the inward life, turning definitely away from all the outward show of religion and all merely physical austerities and renunciations, which he had been practising in the rock-cave near Manresa.

His having passed through such appalling struggles, however, later on enabled him to give his followers such excellent advice and firm guidance in similar periods and situations.

At Manresa he also had his first visions. In full day-light he often beheld in the air a something that gave him great consolation and knowledge, — Inigo de Loyola writes in his memoirs. But he was unable to give an exact account of his visions and spiritual experiences. 'Once'—he says—'I beheld the Divine Essence in the form of a sphere, a little larger than the sun appears to us.' His visionary experiences at Manresa will, however, always remain a secret in their essential nature, and what really took place there will never be really known as no such experiences can ever be described in words. Anyhow, it was there that he received the great and decisive illumination of his life. It was there that the worldly knight-errant of the love of women became the knight-errant of Christ. Even at the age of 52 he still remembered the exact hour of that great event when he sat down by the roadside on his way to the Church of St. Paul and followed with his eyes the swift current of the river. It is best to give the reader Inigo de Loyola's own words : 'The eyes of my mind began to open, not so much in the sense that it beheld a vision, but that it understood and realised many questions referring to the spiritual life as well as to faith and science ; and this was connected with so sharp an illumination that everything appeared new to it.'

This utterly unexpected event became the very centre of Inigo de Loyola's inner development from that day. He gave the greatest imaginable importance to the wonderful clarity that enveloped him on all sides all of a sudden. He says in the most emphatic terms that it made 'another man' of him with 'another mind'. And the spiritual fruit of this overwhelming experience is to be found in his Spiritual Exercises, which were to become the dominant guide for his order.

When Inigo de Loyola left Manresa after a year with the Spiritual Exercises in his pocket, he knew himself still to be at the beginning, not at the end of the road, which prevented him from becoming 'solidified' in his ideas, as it were, and saved him from that pernicious hardening and rigidity of thought which is the end of all further progress in a human life. He found himself in the memorable situation of St. Paul on the road to Damascus :—Lord, what dost Thou want me to do ?—and his whole later life was dedicated to finding the correct answer to this question ; for he knew but too well that it is not given to the human mind to know the Divine Will without great desperate struggles, searchings and difficulties —and without His grace—and always fraught with the great danger of taking one's own impulses and hidden wishes for the voice of God, and following their deceptive promptings.

Don Inigo de Recalde de Onaz y Loyola—Saint Ignatius—died on Friday, August 1st, 1556, in Rome, without extreme unction, without the blessing of the Pope, without a word of leave-taking for his brethren, without an imposing will.

He was canonized 66 years after his death.

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A SAINT FROM THE 'RAMAYANA'

(VALMIKI)

N. BHAKTAVATSALAM

King Raghunatha Raya of Tanjore (17th century A.D.) entertains us with the following interesting account of Valmiki in his book *Valmiki Charita*: The seven blessed Seers (Rishis) set out on a pilgrimage from the South. After worshipping Lord Venkatesvara on the Tirumalai Hill, they went to Ahobal. Whoever visits that kshetra is purified and is merged in bliss, body and soul. It was on that hill that Lord Narasimha manifested Himself in order to slay the demon Hiranyakasipu and there He sports to this day in the company of the dames of the wood. Again it was on that very hill that Garuda performed great penance and attained to the status of being the Lord's Carrier. It was by contact with that hill that Ganga became Bhavanasini (= the destroyer of samsar). The sages bathed in all the sacred waters there, saw all the wonderful sights, and worshipped all the deities.

From there they proceeded to Sri Sailam of lustrous trees and creepers and resplendent stones. There many sadhakas are blessed with the Samadhi-experience. The Supreme Light glows in their hearts. Our seven pilgrims bathed in all the sacred streams there, and worshipped Sri Bhramaramba and Lord Mallikarjuna. The Divine couple granted darsan and boons to the munis.

Seeing the many wonders there the pilgrims moved towards the Vindhya mountain. Bathing in and crossing Narmada and other sacred rivers and penance-groves, they reached Kasi.

After ablutions in the Ganges, they worshipped Lord Visvanath. While they were there, the terrible summer season set in. In that scorching heat they proceeded slowly still northward and crossed the river Tamasa.

Then they lost their path and found themselves stranded in an impassable jungle. Advancing with great difficulty still northwards they sighted the habitation of huntsm There pieces of meat and deer-hides w exposed to the Sun. Birds were hove above, dogs were barking and biting the hi below, pigs were running in mire. Th sight as well as their smell was repulsive intolerable. Hardly could they proceed f ther before an armed hunter confronted th and commanded them to stop and to part w whatever they possessed.

They stood still as they possessed noth He approached and subjected them to terri tortures, to the utmost of his ability, but co squeeze nothing from them as really they h nothing. Thus in vain he got himself sp and stood aloof panting. This is an insta of brutal force being decisively vanquished saintly fortitude.

Pitying the vanquished, the victors sa 'We are ascetics. You thrashed us as would thrash beasts. How could your h do so? Why should you thus court self-r How long can you live on crime with im nity? Are you made of flint? Aren't yo human being? All your past sins consp today and led you to commit greater sin. you not give up these sinful ways at least h after? Life is short. Body is a bubble. for its sake you are persisting in sins.'

Their glances and their words had a m effect on him. His mental agitation slack a little. He asked them: 'O, ascetics, are fools. All that I do is to feed my and children. How can that be a s Determined to save him they replied: 'W there are legitimate means of living, it i to resort to violence, robbery and mu Your wife and children are sharing with your earnings. Will they share the frui your sins?' This question opened the of the hunter. He said, 'O sages, I will a tain from my wife and children wheth

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not they like to share the fruits of my sins. My house is very near. Stay until I return. If you slip away, terrible will be the consequences. Mind you.'

The hunter's heart began to change. By the kind but unfailing glances of those realised souls, the hunter's rough exterior was pierced, and inside lay the lofty qualities that were to make him Valmiki, the great sage, the author of the *Ramayana,* the personification of kindness. Now they began to shine out.

On his way home he saw deer, he saw birds. But the instinct to hurt them became extinct in him. With a heavy mind he went home, threw away his bow and shafts, and sat on a deer-hide heaving hot and deep breath. With a throbbing heart, he recollected his previous sins. For a moment he remained silent not knowing what to do next. Then he asked his beloved : 'Daily I am committing so many sins just to procure a living for us all. Do the fruits of all those sins fall to my lot alone or would you also share them along with me? Tell me frankly.' She laughed and replied : 'We are entitled to a share of your earnings. But if you discard good ways and choose only evil ways to earn, and thereby incur sin, yours will be the whole responsibility on that account and not at all ours.' This reply broke his heart. He put the same question to his grown-up children and got the same answer from them. He realised that the relation with wife and children was maya. He got fed up with worldly life and cut asunder the bonds of unreal attachment.

He ran to where the sages stood, prostrated before them, took the dust of their holy feet, and said : 'O, Blessed souls, your darsan cleansed me of all my sins, and gave me rebirth, as it were. I am blessed. I want to disentangle myself from the snares of the mundane life. Kindly teach me the saving mantra.' They were pleased and surprised at his transformation and kindly decided to teach him Ram-nam.

The speciality of that name is this : It is open to all the castes of people. It can give the fruits of its own as well as those of other mantras. It drives away all evils. For its repetition (japa) there is no restriction of time or place. To utter it is a joy, and to hear it is a feast. Of all the mantras it is the supreme one. It alone, can purify a hunter. Further such people, in the first stage, should repeat that name reversing the order of its letters. They asked him to bathe in the adjacent river, taught him the mantra 'marā' and said, 'Go on repeating this name. By our grace you will proceed to your goal unhindered.' Then the sages went to the Himalayas.

All that they said, the hunter fixed in his mind. He renounced everything else and began to live on roots. He no longer put on the red tilakam on his forehead. Instead, he put there a vertical mark with the mud taken from the bed of a Tulsi plant. The hand that wielded bow and arrow, now held the mendicant's earthen pot. The hair on his head was not tied into an attractive tuft, but was allowed to get matted. He gave up colourful dress and wore tree-barks. Daily he bathed in the Tamasa, and unswervingly went through the prescribed routine of sadhana. In deep meditation he sat motionless like a statue, when his relatives came in search of him.

They thought : 'How is it that he does not even look at us? Perhaps some evil spirit came out of this fig tree and possessed him! He does not move, he does not open his eyes, he does not speak. Some malicious fellow misguided him and persuaded him to forsake his wife and children.'

They addressed him thus : 'Sir, you are our leader. Who is it that deceived you and made you disown us? You are a skilful archer, and master of all these hilly-tracts. Is it proper on your part to behave in ways so unbecoming a man and a huntsman? Would you disappoint your beloved, and turn a deaf ear to the cries of your own children? Who will look after them if you discard them? Please revise your decision and return to your noble station.'

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Thus besieged, he remained firm in his resolve to realise God. Smiling he said, 'Erstwhile you told me that you had no responsibility whatsoever. Why did you come to me again? I will no longer be deceived. Who are you? Who am I? The ocean-tide brings together floating logs and also causes them to part the very next moment. Such are the meetings and partings of men. We have nothing to do with one another. Excuse me and leave me. Hereafter, Sri Rama is my sire, Sita is my mother, and their devotees are my kith and kin. Formerly my own family was my whole universe. Hereafter the whole universe shall be my family.'

Thus silenced, the band of his relatives went back. The hunter's spiritual practices went on unhindered. His knowledge and devotion increased day by day. By repetition, 'marā' became synonymous with 'Rāma'. He gained inward vision and in due course got the blessed blissful experience of identity with the Supreme Sapphirine Luminary. Worlds and sages vied with one another in showering praises on him:

जाड्यं धियो हरति सिञ्चति वाचि सत्यं
मानोन्नतिं दिशति पापमपाकरोति ।
चेतः प्रसादयति दिक्षु तनोति कीर्तिम्
सत्यङ्गतिः कथय किं न करोति पुंसाम् ॥

Contact with the blessed removes the dullness of one's intellect, cleanses him of his sins, makes him speak the truth, enhances his respect, h fies his mind, and spreads his fame. Tell if there is anything that it cannot do for m

अशेषसम्पत्समवाप्तिहेतवस्
समुत्थितापत्कुलधूमकेतवः ।
अपारसंसारसमुद्रसेतवः
पुनन्तु मां ब्राह्मणपादपांसवः ॥

The dust of the feet of the holy, destroy adversities, brings all riches, takes one a the ocean of samsara. May it purify me.

न ह्यम्मयानि तीर्थानि
न देवा मृच्छिलामयाः ।
ते पुनन्त्युरुकालेन
दर्शनादेव साधवः ॥

Delayed will be the purification by sacred wa and by deities invoked in images of stone clay. The blessed souls can purify by t mere look.

Thus by the grace of the Seven Seers hunter got transformed into the great s Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana. Ab such sudden transformations Sri Ramakris says: 'Think of a spring whose outlet obstructed. While looking after vari things in the garden, the plumber accident clears it and the water gushes out. Pe are amazed to see the first manifestations an ever-perfect soul's zeal for God. They "Where was all this devotion and renuncia and love?"'

Sudden Conversion of Saints

TWO SAINTS FROM THE 'BHAGAVATA'

E. R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA

I. SAUBHARI THE ASCETIC

The story of Saubhari is a fine instance of sudden conversion of a sensuous life which was the result of a spiritual perversion. Saubhari was doing severe penance under the waters of Yamuna, for a number of years and he acquired some yogic powers. One the sight of a couple of fish in mating arou in the sage a strong desire to have a spo He approached the great king Mandhata a request to give him one of his daugh in marriage. The king allowed him to the hand of any of his fifty daughters

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swayamvara. Then the sage thought, 'Seeing me old and incapable of winning the favour of young girls, this king is making fun of me. I shall teach him a lesson by making myself young and attractive to maidens.' He assumed an attractive appearance by the help of his yogic powers and entered the mansion where the fifty daughters of the king were seated. Seeing the handsome youth, all of them fell in love with him. Each of them vied with another to become his wife. As a result, the sage had to marry the whole lot.

Saubhari created wonderful places, palaces, and other objects of enjoyment by the help of his yogic powers.

After a long time, one day suddenly a wise thought dawned upon him: 'Ah, what has happened to me! Was I not that man who renounced the pleasures of senses finding them transitory? And lo! I am now a slave of senses! Whither has gone my erudition? Whither dwindled those noble aspirations? Was I not a fool to abandon my true self and attach myself to these women and children? Should I not recover my past glory and strive for the goal of perfection?' No sooner this idea came into his head, than did he coolly retired to the forest. There he recouped the lost spiritual strength and at the end entered yoga samadhi.

II. PINGALA THE COURTESAN

Pingala was a young courtesan of Videha. Nature made her a blemishless beauty and she acquired proficiency in all aesthetic arts. Her grace was an unavoidable attraction for the wealthy youth of the city and in a short period she accumulated a very large heap of wealth. But the more she accumulated riches the more she became greedy and vain. She found pleasure and happiness in extracting handsome amounts from men who fell her prey. It became impossible for her to pass even one night without a wealthy man by her side.

One day evening, as usual, after having bedecked herself with choicest ornaments, costumes and perfumes, Pingala stood at the gate of her mansion casting her bewitching looks all around in search of a rich prey for the night. She was so confident of her accomplishments that she imagined each and every passer-by as coming to call upon her. But somehow or other nobody seemed to be aware of her presence. This made her restless. Again and again she looked herself in a mirror and was pleased to see her blemishless beauty. Walking up and down her gateway she exhausted most of the night in restlessness and vain hope. Nobody turned up to her that night.

While the night was drawing to a close some wise thought dawned upon her. She said to herself: 'What is this I have been doing? I have wasted the whole night for nothing. I suppose there is no person so foolish as myself in the whole city of Videha. For whom I have been waiting? Can the large riches I could accumulate give me peace of mind? Obviously they cannot. How well it would have been, if I had the same passion for the Lord, the Saviour, which I had for riches and sensual pleasures, that evaporate in no time? What useful purpose can be served with wealth and honour? Do they make me immortal? Can they give me peace of mind? No. They can only lead me to destruction.'

She, thereupon, decided to devote the rest of her life to the lotus-feet of Sri Rama and to desist from the way of life she had been pursuing. The next day she could read a purpose of life in the brilliant shine of the sun.

Mystic consciousness is certified to be true by itself and is therefore its own proof. Its fundamental postulate is the self-evident truth that the only evidence for the existence of God is the direct experience of God. Reality is realizable and is not an unknown somewhat or substratum or thing in itself. He who seeks God can see Him face to face.

(P. N. Srinivasachari: *Mystics and Mysticism*, p. 47.)

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चरैवेति

PRISON, LOAN AND ALIENATION

All great teachers have employed parables and figures of speech. With their aid, they have conveyed truths lying beyond the scope of sense perceptions and reasoning. What is wrong with the senses is not their sensitivity, i.e., their ability to give faithful reports of their respective objects. The trouble is that their work creates a 'taste', a craving to repeat the contacts. 'Taste' belongs to the mind. To this extent we may look upon the mind as a sixth sense,—an all-round one which secures reports of the other five and deals with them in its own fashion. The danger, even in this, does not lie in the mental apparatus itself. It lies in the fact that functions like memory, comparisons, judgements, and release of energy are ordinarily based on sectional views, excessive passions and the like. What is it that prevents a total view? The reply is: The sheer force of old habits, of past indulgence in sectional views and in the loves and hatreds arising therefrom. What we have to do is to overthrow these habits by the cultivation of new ones based on well known virtues. This is no doubt hard work. If by mistake we have gone downhill on our cycle, how can we avoid putting forth the necessary effort to return to the starting point before we can reach the height we aim at?

* * * *

We shall now turn to Philo's presentation of these truths. He quotes: 'God led Abraham forth abroad.' Commenting on 'Abraham's Migration', he writes: 'Escape, man, from the foul prison house thy body, with all thy might and main, and from all the pleasures and lusts that act as its jailers.' He even suggests a sustained fight against these enemies till they are vanquished. 'Vex and hurt them,' he says, by hurling every conceivable 'terror' against them. But since these lusts draw their strength from sense reports to begin with, he wisely adds: 'Depart also out of sense perceptions, thy kin.' At this stage he changes the figure of speech to that of a loan. 'Thou at present,' says he, 'thou hast made a loan of thyself to each sense, and art become the property of others, a portion of the goods of those who have borrowed thee.' He explains: Thou knowest 'how eyes draw thee, and ears and the whole crowd of thine kinsfolk towards what they themselves love.' What is to be done, then, is to 'recover the self' that has been lent, and not to allow one's own possessions to be misused,—let 'no portion of thee be alienated and fall into other hands'. Furthermore. Thereby 'thou shalt claim instead a happy life, enjoying in perpetuity the bliss and pleasure derived from good things not foreign to thee, but thine own.'

* * * *

Here are a few of the known facts of Philo's life and work. He was born about 25 B.C. 'as the son of one of the noblest and wealthiest members of the Jewish community in Alexandria.' In addition to a good grounding in the principles of the Jewish faith, he had the benefit of the highest level of Greek education of his day. His brother rose to a high position in the Roman administration in Egypt. But Philo 'despised the honours of a worldly career and devoted himself to the study of Greek wisdom.' 'It was as an expositor of Scripture that he won his fame, and in this activity he was at his best.' 'He felt ill at home, as he himself avows, only when his mind rose from the 'images' of this changing world to the realms of the Absolute.' He came out of his calm meditations and entered active life when there was an upheaval of the Jewry during the time of Emperor Caligula (who tried to instal his own effigy in the temple of Jerusalem). The embassy of notables that left for Rome (A.D. 40) was headed

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Philo,—'a proof of the reputation he had won in his community.' His own account of this 'unsuccessful mission' amply shows his firmness and his ability to elude the snares of court intrigue. After 'the storm abated', Philo retired from public life and resumed his writings 'till the time of his death (before A.D. 50).' Adequate and prompt response to crises when they come, and renewed plunging into the depths of meditation and philosophical writings when the crises pass,—what else can be the characteristics of one who has scaled the heights of genuine wisdom and illumination?

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

The quotations are taken from *Philo*, by Hans Lewy, East and West Library.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The *Editorial* discusses about the philosophy and psychology of the Sudden Conversion of saints and holy men.

The serial on the first page, 'In the loving guise of fun', has been prepared by Sister Savitri, a German devotee.

The serial 'Charaiveti' is being continued for the ninth year though with a short break of a few months last year. We congratulate Subandhu for his continued energy.

The picture on the cover page is of the Ramakrishna temple at Belur Math, our Headquarters.

Sri N. Bhaktavatsalam, M.A., B.O.L., is Editor, *Ramakrishna Prabha* and Head of the Telugu Department, Vivekananda College, Madras.

Dr Birinchi Kumar Barua, M.A., B.L., Ph.D. (London), is Professor in the Gauhati University.

Dr R. K. Yajnik, M.A., Ph.D. (London), is Chairman of the Governing Body and Honorary Professor of English, P. D. M. College of Commerce, Rajkot.

Dr Prabhu Shankara, M.A., D.Phil., is Lecturer in Kannada in the Maharaja's College, Mysore and Editor, Mysore University Quarterly Journal.

Dr Sreekrishna Sarma, M.A., Ph.D., Sahitya Siromani, is from the Venkateswara University.

Dr M. A. Karandikar, M.A., Ph.D., is Professor in Elphinstone College, Bombay.

Sri Gouri Kumar Brahma is Secretary, Orissa Sahitya Akademi, Orissa Sangeet Natak Akademi and Orissa Lalitkala Akademi, Bhubaneswar.

Prof. G. N. Mathrani, M.A. (Cantab), Dip. Ed. (Leeds), is from Bombay.

Swami Paramatmananda of the Ramakrishna Order is Editor, *Ramakrishna Vijayam*.

Sri Shankarnath Roy is the well-known author of *Bharater Sadhak*, on the saints of India, in Bengali.

Dr Satchidananda Dhar, M.A., D.PHIL., is Principal and Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Bengali, Ramakrishna Mahavidyalaya, Tripura.

Sri Ramlal is Asst. Editor, *Kalyan*, Gorakhpur, U.P.

Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya is of the Ramakrishna Order.

Dr M. Hafiz Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., is a retired Professor of the Allahabad University.

Sri N. B. Chatterjee is a top official of New Delhi.

Sri Anthony Elenjimittam, Editor, *Basic Education*, is well known as a writer of several books.

Mr Wolfram H. Koch from Switzerland is a veteran writer on saints for the last three decades.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY: By Swami Abhedananda. (Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19-B, Raja Rajakrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. 51. Price Rs. 3.)

Swami Abhedananda belongs to the first rank of the Sadhus of the Ramakrishna Order who, following the foot steps of their great spiritual forbear, Swami Vivekananda, have made the lion of Vedanta roar in America. A powerful and convincing speaker, the Swami is the author of many instructive treatises on Indian religion, its theory and practice. The book under review contains a lecture delivered by him to the Philosophy Union of the University of California in 1901. It is a trenchent exposition of the Substance of Vedanta, 'this most ancient system of philosophy which has helped mankind in solving the most intricate problems of life and death and which has led the truth-seeking minds of all ages and climes to the threshold of the abode of the absolute Reality of the universe.' The Swami points out that 'the ancient philosophical systems of Greece and the modern philosophies of Germany are the faint echoes of the thundering expressions of what the ancient Vedic seers of Truth realised, at least two thousand years before the Christian era. He criticises the Christian theory 'of special creation' and refutes the charge that the Vedanta philosophy teaches that this world is an illusion'.

In an instructive comparison of Vedanta with Kantian philosophy he shows how 'Vedanta philosophy, accepting the transcendental thing-in-itself as Reality brings it into the realm of experience and connects it with everything that can be perceived by the senses of human beings', whereas Kant's thing-in-itself cannot be known, Vedantic Brahman is knowable; as chit, it is knowledge itself.

Applying the metaphysical principle of *tattvamasi* to the moral sphere, the Swami shows how Vedantic ethics is superior to other systems starting from the extra-cosmic cosmic conception of the Dvaitin and going through the Visishtadvaitin theory of the immanent and intra-cosmic God Vedanta culminates in the Advaitic realization of God as absolute Being, the Reality, the soul of souls which is non-different from the individual souls. The book ends with the description of the religion as yoga and a brief account of the several kinds of yoga as means to God-realisation.

Swami Abhedananda has succeeded in presenting to his hearers (and now to his readers) the core of Vedanta in a manner that is as auth-tic as it is arresting, little wonder that 'after the lecture was over, he was warmly congratulated by almost all the noted four hundred Professors of different Universities assembled there.' Neatly printed and handsomely got up with beautiful pictures of the Swami, Josiah Royce, Prof. H-son and William James, a microfilm text of page of the lecture and of the Wheeler Hall the California University where the lecture was delivered, this book is a thing of beauty which the purchasers will love to possess.

P. SANKARANARAYANA

THE HINDU IDEAL: By Sri Ramananda Sarasvati. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17.) Pages Price Rs. 10.

As very pertinently remarked by Sri R. Krishnaswami Aiyer, the devoted son of the author regarding this publication, many of the statements here will be unpalatable to those whose training has been divorced from Hindu tradition but it will be useful even to them if they care to know the standpoint of the strictly orthodox Hindu. 'Sanatana Dharma' which compendiously describes all that the Hindu has to observe in his daily conduct of life, both theoretical and practical, has been dwelt upon by the ascetic author, Sri Ramananda Sarasvati. After being Grihasta and rearing up a large family, the idea of Sanyasa became imminent to him, and while in the fourth Asrama, he gave of his strong convictions about Hindu ideals, a series of articles on the ever dear subject of his—the regeneration of the Hindu in the grip of Western ideals.

We have in the thirty-three chapters collected here a very elaborate treatment of the many and varied precepts and practices of the Hindus. In the first section of ten chapters dealing with the theoretical aspect of Hindu thought and religion almost all the abstruse as well as philosophic conceptions according to time-honoured Sastras are expounded with a wealth of illustrations and straight exhortations. In the second part, concerned with practical teaching of methods of training and conduct of oneself along strict orthodox lines, one has necessarily to be made aware of the ramifications of ritualistic and absolutely unadulterated Hindu ways of life, so as to enable everyone to know what has been enjoined of him both for his individual welfare as well as for his share in the community as its member

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The last few chapters give, in a rapid survey, some of the essentials of the great philosophic thought we have inherited from the sages of old.

Anyone imbued with a real desire to have a clear, cogent and well-explained conception of what has gone into the propounding of a wonderful philosophical tradition such as ours, will not be at all disappointed by a close perusal of this volume. Despite the ultra-modernistic outlook that is over-taking most of us, we can still understand how much the religion and philosophy handed down to us by our forefathers cannot be dispensed with as sheer unscientific thought. If at all one can at times feel the incompatibility of some of the ancient ideals with the present-day tendencies of the entire human race, one cannot fully justify everything modern as based upon soundness of principle and justice.

But certainly even the most unorthodox among us find, in this exhaustive treatment of the subject, discussions apparently unattractive, but on closer examination yielding satisfaction, worthy of serious thought of any of our best intellectuals. The author himself in his original note when the first edition of this volume came out, expressed the feeling: 'I do not claim, and cannot, that they (readers) should accept as true the views herein expressed without examining them critically'. Let us at least do him the justice of carefully pursuing his thought processes before concluding in haste that all that he utters cannot gain ready acceptance.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

CHARACTER AND NATION BUILDING: By M. K. Gandhi. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 64. Price 40 nP.

This tiny brochure gives in a nutshell the scheme for the rehabilitation of the political and social structure as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi and his no less arduous, though by no means unpracticable programme for the regeneration of the individual and the society.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

A SEMINAR ON SAINTS: Edited by T. M. P. Mahadevan. Distributors: Ganesh & Co, Madras-17. Pp. 455. Price Rs. 12.50.

This volume is a symposium of papers presented at the Second Seminar of the Union for the Study of Great Religions held at Madras in 1956. The papers and addresses, 53 in number, are critical studies by eminent scholars on the life and teachings of saints of different religions and down the centuries all over the world.

It will be a covetable treasure to possess a book like this.

JYOTI: Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore-19. Pp. 48. Price 40 nP.

A collection in Devanagari script of a few popular songs including those on Sri Ramakrishna and also the Ramanama Sankirtana, used in the Ramakrishna Ashramas.

KALYAN: Edited by Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar and Sri C. L. Goswami. Published at the Gita Press, Gorakhpur (India). Pp. 704. Price Rs. 7.50.

This special Number of the Hindi magazine has been devoted to the well-known *Devi-Bhagavata* and has been enriched with partial translation and stories of the original, along with a number of pictures depicting the incidents mentioned.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANSKRIT — ENGLISH

KHANDAKHADYA-SAHASRIKA: By D. A. Somayaji, W. G. B. College, Bhimavaram. P. 199. Price Rs. 3.

This is the first volume of the author's projected *Kavyam* of 1000 verses in Sanskrit. There are in this book 284 verses accompanied by the author's own English rendering and the volume is entitled 'The Lord and His Estate'.

The verses are readable and are cast in different metrical moulds. As the general title *Khanda-khadya* implies, this is to be consumed and enjoyed in parts. The verses deal with various subjects of the author's fancy: God's Creation, Who am I, The Mango Tree, The Sun, The Flower, Cow, Poet, Bharat Today, Husband and Wife, Sputniks and Luniks. The poet voices his wonder at this variegated creation and raises questions leaving the readers to answer. The writer is well read in the Vedic lore and often he presses verses (on common topics) into service for explaining the Vedic thought. (P. 48).

It is refreshing to see the author following, side by side with the ancient tradition, the contemporary thought in the field of spiritual evolution. He observes: "When this universal outlook develops among men and nations, then dawns a new era of bliss for the humanity at large and perhaps a race of supermen may take birth out of this human race, as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo. Nature has more to give us and her course has a meaning and a purpose." (P. 141).

The book provides light and pleasant reading.

M. P. PANDIT

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Sri Ramanavami

On the 5th April, there was Ramanama singing after the evening Arati. On Sunday, April 10, at 6 p.m., after the opening song by Swami Priyananda, Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan spoke on 'Sacrifice and Service in the Ramayana', giving salient quotations from the Epic. He said that the word 'Jayanti' has its proper use when it is applied to the birthday of great souls and Avatars. Our heartfelt homage goes to the Adi-Kavi Valmiki who gave us a human document.

The transcendental Being, the Veda-purusha, came down to the earth as Sri Rama, undergoing all the troubles and tribulations a human being passes through. Yajna or sacrifice is a great idea in the Ramayana. It means giving up the lower for the higher, the Artha and Kama for Dharma. Rama was the embodiment of Dharma. Sacrifice was fully practised by Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Guhaka and even the birds and monkeys. Service is the expression of love and is spontaneous. Such service was rendered by all the aforesaid characters. Sacrifice and service are the two noble ideals exemplified in the Ramayana. Our duty will be to try to translate these ideas in our lives. May Sri Rama shower His blessings on us.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, HYDERABAD

The 125th Birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the twin-cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad with great enthusiasm. Swami Kailasanandaji and Swami Suddhasatwanandaji, President and Manager respectively of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras graced the occasion with their presence and delivered several lectures in the Math and the City.

Swami Suddhasatwanandaji spoke on the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' at Secunderabad, 'Life of Sri Ramakrishna' at the Government Colony, Malakpet, 'Sri Ramakrishna's Go[illegible] at the Irram Manjil Colony on March 15, 1[illegible] respectively. On the 19th he and Swami K[illegible]sanandaji spoke on the 'Life and Teaching[illegible] Swami Vivekananda' at Mahboob Co[illegible] Swami Tapasyanandaji of the local Math [illegible] the gist of the lectures in mellifluous T[illegible] all these days.

On the 20th March, the function at Sri R[illegible]krishna Math, Begumpet, started early in [illegible] morning with special Puja and Havan. T[illegible] was a large gathering. At noon, more than [illegible] devotees and Daridranarayanas were fed. T[illegible] there was Bhajan and devotional music. S[illegible] Krishnamurty Sastry gave an interesting [illegible] course on 'Krishna Prema'. This was foll[illegible] by Sri Natesa Iyer's Gotu Vadyam.

Under the Presidentship of Swami Ka[illegible]nandaji, the evening function started with [illegible] reading of the Annual Report of Sri R[illegible]krishna Math, Begumpet by its Secretary, [illegible] Venkatesa Iyer. Swami Suddhasatwana[illegible] gave an inspiring discourse on the life of [illegible] Ramakrishna. Then Swami Tapasyanandaji [illegible] counted on the superhuman birth and Av[illegible]hood of Sri Ramakrishna and the v[illegible] Sadhanas followed by him. Honourable S[illegible] Chandramouli, Minister for Religious E[illegible]ments, Government of Andhra Pradesh, s[illegible] on the importance of Shakti Worship and B[illegible]macharya and of the unique achievement[illegible] Sri Ramakrishna.

On the 21st March, a public meeting was [illegible] at 6-30 p.m. at the Mahaboob College, Sec[illegible]rabad, under the auspices of the Teachers' A[illegible]ciation. The Principal of the College introd[illegible] the Swamijis to the audience and recalle[illegible] memory the incident when Swami Vivekan[illegible] spoke in the very same hall in the latter [illegible] of the 19th century. Swami Kailasanandaji [illegible] Swami Suddhasatwanandaji advised the tea[illegible] to observe self-sacrifice and remember [illegible] theirs is one of the noblest of professions.

'As a general rule, one must go through a long preparation before one can attain perfection. Babu Dwarka Nath Mitter was not made a Judge of the High Court in one day. He had to work hard and spend years of arduous toil and study before he was raised to the Bench of the High Court. Those who are not willing to undergo the trouble and labour must be prepared to remain mere briefless pleaders. However, through the grace of God, sudden exaltation does take place now and then, as is the case with Kalidasa, who, from the state of an ignorant rustic, became at once, through the grace of Mother Saraswati, the greatest poet of India.'

Sri Ramakrishna

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII JUNE 1960 No. 2

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Durgadas Pyne often boasted to his relative Sitanath and others that nobody had even seen the women of his house, nor could know anything about their inner apartment. One day, when Gadadhar (Sri Ramakrishna) came there and heard him bragging thus, he said: 'Can women be protected by purdah? They can be protected only by good moral training and devotion to God. I can see everyone and know everything of the inner apartments, if I want to. At this Durgadas became even more boastful and said: 'Well, let me see, how you do it!' 'Very well, we shall see,' replied Gadadhar and went away.

Gadadhar, who sometimes would act in Kamarpukur the parts of female characters in woman-dress and who would then be exactly like a woman in his voice and movements, came one afternoon just before dusk in a coarse, dirty sari and with some silver ornaments to the house of Durgadas with a basket under his arm and a veil covering his face. He introduced himself to Durgadas as a weaver-woman, who had come to the market for selling yarn, but had the misfortune to be left behind by her companions and therefore prayed for shelter for the night. Durgadas asked what village she came from, etc. and finally said: 'Very well, go to the inner apartment and ask the women to take you in.' Gadadhar went inside, repeated his story to the women and amused them with his gossip. Pleased with her, the women pointed out a place for rest and gave her refreshments. While eating Gadadhar observed minutely every room and each woman. He not only heard their conversation, but took himself part in it. The whole evening was spent in this way, until Gadadhar heard his brother calling loudly his name. He shouted back from the inner apartments, 'I am coming, brother!' and ran out to him. Thus Durgadas came to know everything. At first he was a little embarrassed and annoyed that Gadadhar had fooled him and his family. But soon he began to laugh, seeing how well the boy had played his part. Henceforth the women of Durgadas's house could also come to Sitanath's like many other women of the traders' quarters to listen to Gadadhar's readings and songs.

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SELF-EFFORT IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

Every goal to be achieved requires effort. Without the latter nothing worthwhile can ever be ours. The progress that has been made in the fields of science and technology, communication and commerce or of even arts and letters is the result of tremendous efforts of man for centuries. In the case of religious life too this effort is necessary.

What exactly is the place of self-effort in spiritual progress? It is often believed that the theories of Karma and grace are opposed to the idea of self-effort. The theory of predetermination of circumstances is against this idea. Freewill, which is essential for self-effort, also has its limitation. The ideas regarding these factors in spiritual life must be cleared first to appreciate the scope of self-exertion.

The theory of grace is held supreme by the devotees. It says that self-surrender to God is the only thing necessary for spiritual realization. Our ego must be suppressed to pave the way for the coming of divine mercy. As even every little thing of the world is done through His will, is there any provision for any endeavour on our part? This is an important idea in religious literature. And this is true. But it has also been pointed out that certain preparations are necessary before a man can deserve the divine grace. Moreover, the whole-souled surrender of the devotee confers on him all the benefits of spiritual disciplines. Such a devotee has an ideal character. Even when he is only on the way, he tries to direct his whole mind to God. What is the result? He forgets even his body. His whole centre of life shifts, from himself to God. Selfishness, egotism, greed and other impediments are unknowingly over and higher qualities take possession of him. The sattvic qualities become his are mentioned in the G

> Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadiness in knowledge and Yoga; alms, control of the senses, Yajna, reading the Shastras, austerity, uprightness;
>
> Non-injury, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness;
>
> Boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride; these belong to one born for a divine state, descendant of Bharata. (XVI.

Sri Ramakrishna has described beautifully how these virtues are automatically conferred on a devotee through his intense love of the divine. He says:

> What are the indications of God's entry into the human heart? As the glimmering dawn heralds the rising sun, so unselfishness, purity and righteousness announce the advent of the Lord.
>
> Before visiting a servant's house to receive his hospitality, a king will send there the necessary articles like seats, garments and food from his own stores so that the servant may be enabled to receive his master properly and show due honour. In the same manner the Lord sends love, reverence and faith into the yearning heart of the devotee before He makes His advent.
>
> (*Sayings* 937.

So we see that though there may be direct self-effort for realizing the divine excepting of course his all-consuming love for Him, actually a devotee undergoes all the disciplines impelled by a higher force. He may not consider

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efforts as his own, but he does exactly those things that are enjoined on a spiritual aspirant.

Then there is the question of the law of Karma which is sometimes felt to be against self-effort. This law is no doubt valid. But what exactly does it mean? As we sow so we reap, is its idea. Every cause must produce a proportionate effect. So the results of all our actions must be experienced by us in this or a later life. Every action leaves an impression in our mind, which has a tendency to be repeated in future. Viewed thus the theory of Karma provides a great motive force for self-effort, for every new action will create a new tendency. So religious action will produce religious tendency, thus making the mind more and more fit for perfection. Moreover, though samskara may be compelling for some time, by undergoing the experience the tendency will be weaker and by the effort of will better samskaras can be made predominant.

It is true that sometimes we may feel helpless against our bad samskaras. The great teachers have encouraged us that by our thought of the divine, the bonds are loosened and slowly the mind becomes stronger to make further effort in the direction. The greatest merit of the theory of Karma is that it does not give up any case as hopeless. Every one will reach the highest goal through striving, if necessary for a succession of lives. And no effort goes in vain. Even a little of it becomes the starting point of great good. Moreover, as the devotees know, God, the giver of the fruits of Karma, is not only a great judge but the repository of mercy. 'If an aspirant goes one step towards the Divine Mother', says Sri Ramakrishna, 'She comes a hundred steps towards him'. The evil effects of Karma can be minimized or even cancelled by Him. Even if it is not mitigated, a man of realization does not actually suffer the fruits of the result of action for lack of his identification with his body and mind. Thus Acharya Sankara has argued while speaking about the Prarabdha Karma which has become operative and must be experienced. The unoperative Karmas of course are all burnt down by the fire of wisdom. Hence we see that the theory of Karma is not one of wholesale predetermination and is a great incentive for self-effort.

Self-effort implies work. Does not work bind a man? As it is said in the Gita, man works by nature. Every work leads to a new work and thus it seems there will be no end to this chain of work and its effect and hence of the cycle of birth and death. But it has been pointed out in the Gita that consecrated action does not bind a man; in fact, it releases him from the thraldom of Karma.

> The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of Yajna; do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for Yajna alone, devoid of attachment. (III.9)

A man unattached feels that work is done by the senses, by the Gunas, by the Prakriti. So suppression of the ego only means to disjoin oneself from identification with the doership of action and separating the real 'I' from the active 'I'. If we do not think ourselves as doers nor do we expect the results, the main causes of bondage are gone.

> Do thou perform obligatory action; for action is superior to inaction; and even the bare maintenance of thy body would not be possible if thou art inactive. (II. 8)
>
> Therefore, do thou always perform actions which are obligatory, without attachment; —by performing action without attachment, one attains to the highest. (III. 19)

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> Renouncing all actions to Me, with mind centred on the Self, getting rid of hope and selfishness, fight—free from mental fever. (III. 30)

The idea of predetermination goes along with the idea of Karma-phala. The devotees too accept that everything is done through God's will. Though it is true in the ultimate analysis, predetermination leaves a scope for self-effort also. Do we know earlier what is ordained? So, we are to lead the life in accordance with the teachings of the scriptures and the dictates of conscience. And this effort in its turn guides us towards the goal.

Then, there is long discussion in the religious literature regarding free-will. If everything is preordained, where then is the free-will? As we told above, there are alternatives in a given point of time, which an aspirant is free to follow or not, though not in the ultimate sense. Sri Ramakrishna has finely pointed out the scope and limitation of free-will with the cow analogy. A cow is tied to a post with a long rope. It can either remain near the post or go as far as the rope goes. Similarly a man is free to act, though not absolutely so. So free-will has a scope in our spiritual striving. And those who are more or less practised in attuning their will to God's will find that it is really God's will that operates through them. To such men no action is binding and bonds of Karma are loosened. Such men find no inconsistency in their efforts which are really God-inspired. The divine inspiration for a progressing soul often comes through his own purified mind. As Sri Ramakrishna says, his mind itself becomes his Guru at the end.

So we see that self-effort is essential in spiritual life, though however God's grace can never be ignored. God is the self-willed sovereign. He is not bound by any conditions. But self-effort the way for the grace of God operative. As Swami Saradananda the breeze of grace is ever flowing duty is to set the sail to get the of that breeze. Of course, by too stress on self-effort, we must more egotistic. For with God organs we serve God, then where scope for feeling our importance? duty of a spiritual aspirant is to his ego by identifying himself wi higher ego of God or by consecr Egoism is to identify ourselves wi body, mind etc., and not to know we are really the Self. This division and competition which helpful for real progress. But Ramakrishna said, there is no ha thinking oneself as the son or se of God.

> If you find that you cannot drive feeling of 'I', then let it remain 'servant I'. There is not much from the ego which is centred in the 'I am the servant of God; I am Hi tee.' Sweets cause dyspepsia, but no candy which is an exception. The 's I', the 'I' of a devotee, the 'I' of —each of these is like a line draw a stick on the surface of water; t does not last long.

So these are the two paths, kn oneself as the Atman or consi oneself as God's servant.

Though giving full stress on Sri Ramakrishna recommends str one's own exertion. He says:

> Adopt adequate means for the e seek to attain. You cannot get bu crying yourself hoarse, saying, 'T butter in the milk.' If you wish butter, turn the milk into curd and c well, and then you will have butt if you long to see God, take to s practices. What is the good of mer ing; 'O God! O God!'?

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Acharya Sankara speaks of three prime necessities for spiritual realization viz., human life, intense desire for liberation and guidance from a great teacher. The first condition is already fulfilled. The second too is in our hand. If that is satisfied, the third also is automatically fulfilled. That has been found to be the spiritual law.

Buddha stresses on this self-effort saying :

> Exertion is my beast of burden ; carrying me to Nibbana he goes without turning back, to the place where having gone one does not grieve. (*Kasibharadvaja-sutta*)

Christ stressed on it when he said :

> And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
>
> For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11 : 9, 10.)

The spiritual disciplines enjoined by all religions fall under self-effort. The practice of austerity, self-control, japa and meditation is nothing but effort. Hence we see that self-effort is as important as grace and as long as we do not feel the effect of grace, effort must be made to achieve the highest goal of life.

SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

(*Translated by Narayan Chandra Bhattacharya* : *Continued from the April issue*)

In the hands of robbers

It was afternoon. As we walked, I marked four men following us some way off our path. The plain was alluvial, the men were sometimes visible and sometimes hidden from our view. I suspected them to be highwaymen.

The sickly Bhakat had lagged behind. I thought of advising him to take to his heels, for he had his bag and possibly money too. But my next thought was, where could he escape ? Also my shouting would reach the ears of the robbers. Let us walk as we have been doing, leaving things in the hands of the Master.

Again I thought, 'One of the men has a blanket on and a red turban on the head. I have seen at Calcutta policemen with blanket and red turban. They may be guards of some Zamindar (landlord) '. But such doubt did not last long. As I proceeded I saw the four robbers or sepoys had marched cross-country along the plain and were on my way, in front of me. 'How far is Narayan Sarovar ? ' asked I. They were moving. One of them stopped and said, 'Six miles.' Next all of them stood in our way. In the meantime I came near them and was about to ask, 'Are you robbers ? Do you rob people ? ' But scarcely had a word escaped my lips when one of them placed his hand on my shoulder and thrust me aside. At once I said, '*Mere gano, mere gano, muke maryo mu*' (Take whatever I have, only do not kill me) '. At once a stick landed on my back twice. By the grace of God the stick was of thin bamboo and I had a coat stuffed with cotton and there was a bundle on my back containing clothes, a book, a tiger's skin and other things.

As I lay on my back I saw the four men had not the appearance I had seen before. Their faces had undergone a distortion, the eyes had become red with the balls rolling.

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Two of them held naked swords shining in the sun. An old man thundered in a rough tone, '*Lugrā Khol* (strip off your clothes)'. At once I threw before them all my clothes—except the koupin (loin-cloth) and went on repeating, '*Mere gano, mere gano, muke maryo mu*'.

The robbers made a thorough search of my clothes and the pockets of my Alkhalla (long coat). In the meantime there appeared the Bhakat. Frightened by the terrible scene and the naked swords he uttered in a piteous tone, '*Ham to gaye* (I am undone).'

A weakling, he was trembling all over, the bowl in his hand and the bag on the shoulder had slipped off, the tongue had protruded—trembling he sat down on the road.

At the sight of his face, distorted with fear, I could not help smiling even in this dire peril. But at once I told the robbers, 'The force with which you thrust me will kill this weakling, don't lay hands on him.' 'Hand all you have over to them,' said I to the Bhakat. 'I shall see to it that you get utensils and other things once again.' He was not the man to pay heed to my words or to believe me. With folded hands he prayed to the robbers, 'My friends, do not seize these articles of a poor fellow, if I miss them I shall never recover them.' I saw the poor fellow was more attached to his worn-out bag than to his life.

On the otherhand, as the robbers found a tiger's skin and some books only in the pockets of my alkhalla and bundle on my back they were sure the Sanyasi had an empty purse. They then moved towards the Bhakat but seeing the condition of his bag they stopped and did not even touch it.

They then consulted among themselves and ordered me to fold my hands behind my back so that they might bind them. But by that time I had regained my courage; I said in a clear tone, 'No, I shall not place my hands as you say.' The robbers had sheathed their swords, but they unsheathed them slightly, and said, 'Unless you bring your hands at the back they will be cut off forthwith.' 'D you like, I won't bring my hands at the b said I firmly.

Then they took my turban and beg bind my hands together with it. But b they had finished doing so they were a to leave when I said, 'Hallo, take these clothes. You are poor, they will be c in winter. No one will find you out, nor I tell anybody.' But that fellow wearing turban and a blanket touched my foot said, '*Dua karo, Maharaj, kapra pind* (Let go, Maharaj, put on your clothes). placing his fingers on the lips he sign me not to divulge it to anybody. I still re ed, 'Take those warm clothes.' But fort they vanished as fast as their legs c them.

From Narayan Sarovar to Ashapur

After the robbers had departed I we my way slowly with the Bhakat. Befor had passed some two miles we met a g of Vaishnava Sadhus, some twenty-fi number, coming back after pilgrimage. B began to chat with them. I walked on.

At night-fall I reached Narayan Saro learn that on the previous day Swamij gone to the seat of the goddess Ashapu a different route.

The fear of the attack of the robber depression sent me down with fever at Na Sarovar. Afterwards the Mahanta (priest) said to me, 'Yours is a rebirth. would not be alive now if you had had five rupees in your purse. At that very they once killed a man for a trifling su thirty rupees.'

For fever I could not bathe at Na Sarovar. The Mahanta Brahmachari celibate chief priest) gave me a guard horse. I went on horse-back with the g

From Narayan Sarovar I came to the s place of Kotishwar Mahadeva. Kotish to the extreme west of India. The A Sea washes its feet. Kotishwar is a L

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Here Saivas (worshippers of Siva) take impressions of hot coins on their arms. From Kotishwar I started for Ashapuri.

On our way to Ashapuri the guard pointed towards a village and said, 'The people here are highwaymen.' At Ashapuri I dismissed the guard and the horse. Here I was informed that Swamiji had moved on to Mandavi.

At Ashapuri I spent a night. A large stone besmeared with vermillion — that was the seat of the goddess. Ashapuri marks the north-eastern boundary of Cutch, very near Baluchistan, famous for its incense.

The ways of the priests of the goddess are Musalman-like. They do not tie their dhoti on the backside — they are called Kapadis. They like to eat garlic, eat chicken and use no sacred thread. Ashapuri village is very sparsely populated, there is the desert all around. Rainfall is very scanty.

The Kapadis (priests) hired a camel with its driver for me. They took me to the next village. Likewise, the zamindar (chief of the Prince of Cutch) of every village got me a horse and a guide to take me from village to village.

On horse-back

Thus I came to a village where the Diwan (steward) of the zamindar advised me, 'The days are very hot, but there is moon-light at night. You should rather travel at night.' He gave me a horse and a guide. Between that village and the next there was an extensive field infested with highwaymen. A month back a girl was going from her father's place to her father-in-law's. She was waylaid and killed and robbed.

At mid-night we were at the centre of the plain when the guard suddenly stopped and looked about. On my enquirings his reply was, 'A bad man hides himself behind a tree.' I was rather afraid. But the guard reassured me saying, 'Don't fear, I too belong to their gang. So long as I am with you nobody will do you harm.' 'How is it that you are one of them?' 'How can I help it, your holiness?. The pay I get at the zamindar's office is too meagre. So sometimes I have to join the gang of robbers.'

Out of sheer fright I took the name of my God to save me. A robber to protect me! But the guard cheered me up. Towards day-break we got to a village where I was lodged in a Dharmashala (a temporary abode for travellers).

The guard expressed his remorse thus, 'It is not at all good to be on the road with a sadhu. Had you, a sadhu, not been here, my horse would not go without its fodder. There is hay enough inside the house and but for your presence I would easily scale the wall and steal it.'

The men of Cutch have a great devotion for sadhus. If a sadhu becomes their guest they would feed him as sumptuously as a near kinsman. If a sadhu comes into the village the people would wrangle as to whose guest he is to be. Each of them lays claim to the privilege of being his host.

Meeting with Swamiji at Mandavi

Sometimes on a camel and sometimes on horse-back I reached Mandavi with the guard. There I had the news that Swamiji was putting up with a Bhatia (a man of Cutch). I lost no time in reaching there.

I saw Swamiji had undergone a great change in his appearance. His beauty illuminated the whole room. He was startled to see me there. He listened to all that I had experienced on the way. It filled him with this apprehension, 'Gangadhar has braved all these dangers and has pursued me even at the risk of his life. Surely he will never give up haunting my company.' 'I have a plan,' said he. 'I cannot realise it if any of my Gurubhais be in my company.'

But I was obstinate. At last Swamiji said, 'Look here, I have become a bad man, leave my company.' 'Who cares if you have become bad? I love you. I am not concerned

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with your conduct. But I won't stand in your way. I was so anxious to see you. My anxiety has been allayed. Now you may go alone.'

Swamiji was glad to hear this. The very next day he left for Bhuj. I did not join his company. I waited a day before I started for Bhuj. Swamiji was now sure that I would not intrude upon his freedom.

Sadhu Ananda Ashram

At Bhuj Swamiji said to me, 'The Rajah here is paying us too much attention and that may be an eyesore to many if we stay here long. Twenty-five years ago a Bengalee Sanyasi named Ananda Ashram came to Bhuj and helped much in the improvement of the State. At that time it was a custom with the Prince to lease out villages. The lessee would extort from the tenants several times the amount to be paid to the Prince as revenue. The tenants were thus much tortured. On Ananda Ashram's advice the Prince abolished that custom and introduced the good system that obtains in the British Raj. The State is still ruled in the manner introduced by him. But such reforms did not find favour in the eyes of the State officers. Ananda A became their eyesore. His enemies poison with his food and killed him. W have the same fate. Let us move off tomorrow.'

Separation from Swamiji

From Bhuj we two came to Manda stayed there a fortnight. Next Swamiji ed for Porbandar, and five or six days I followed. There we met again.

Here Swamiji was a guest at Shankar P rang's place. He was the governor of bandar (Sudamapuri). Swamiji said the whole of India he had not seen Pandu equal in Vedic learning. As a commenta Atharva Veda was not available, he com one himself. Swamiji used to speak with in Sanskrit and in a short time becam adept in it.

From Porbandar Swamiji went to Jun and I to Kathiawad. I passed through J Gondal and Rajkot and came to Jamnagar terrible storm overtook me on my way to nagar. Here I lived a year.

(To be continu

DEDICATION

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

When all is quiet, at dead of night,
Lying still, in my mind I say :
'At dawn, on opening my eyes,
May I behold Thee.'

'Active or silent,' within Thy
Vibrant light I humbly pray,
'May I with joy dedicate to Thee
All I do this day.'

While I am wrapt in work, there
Flashes in my heart the prayer :
'Let me sit with Thee awhile
At dusk when work is through.'

And when darkness falls, I go
Into my room and eagerly say :
'With Thy kind look wipe away all
The cares of my bruised soul.'

(Adapted from a Bengali poem by Tag

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SUDDEN CONVERSION OF TWO SAINTS

WOLFRAM H. KOCH

ST. AUGUSTINE

The life and development of St. Augustine was so rich in important events and often apparently so contradictory that it is quite impossible to give any adequate idea of it in a short article.

It was the life of a religious genius, who after innumerable struggles, disappointments and periods of hopeless scepticism finally attained the peace he had been longing for all his life and the fulfilment of his ideal. He had a surprising talent to give himself up, and this with his whole heart, to manifold, often utterly contradictory or incompatible influences, greatly dominated, however, by his intellectual temperament of such intense passionateness that could not but melt down and try to assimilate everything that came into its field of inquiry. He was a genius of receptivity, often of a strange kind of passionate passivity even, if such a term may be used, always waiting to be overpowered by his deepest essence.

He was born in the small town of Tagaste in 354. His father was an official in the town-council and a land-owner with a great number of slaves, an impulsive, hot-tempered, sensual African, who allowed himself to be baptized only shortly before his death and all his life never thought very highly of faithfulness in marriage. His mother Monica, who later became a saint, was a Christian and lived a life of self-abnegation at the side of her husband, looking after her three children and always full of hope that they might become Christians one day. She seems to have been a woman of cool chastity, but of a passionately tenacious will, full of ambitious plans for her son.

The young Augustine studied rhetoric in the neighbouring town of Madaura where he came in touch with the poems of Virgil which greatly influenced him and for which he never lost his admiration for the rest of his life. The crisis of puberty threw him into all sorts of shady sensual adventures, and at that time even his mother became utterly powerless to influence him in any way.

From Madaura Augustine went to Carthage to give the final touch to his studies. There he took up the profession of lawyer, enjoying at the same time all that the town had to offer him in the way of sensual pleasures, above all love-affairs, finally taking a mistress, who later became the mother of his son Adeodatus. At Carthage he became a Manichee, as their teaching seemed to offer him the realisation of Truth without forbidding its devotees the lusts of the flesh, attributing them as well as all other human weaknesses and perversions to the God of Darkness.

After returning for one year to Tagaste, probably in order to help his widowed mother, he once more came back to Carthage, where his mistress had given birth to a son. There he opened a school of rhetoric, wrote plays, a treatise on the beautiful, occupied himself with occultism and astrology, slowly and imperceptibly beginning to lose faith in the Manichean doctrines.

Fearing the persecution of the inquisition against the Manichees proclaimed by the emperor Theodosius he left Carthage for Rome in spite of the tears of his mother. Rome, however, had no attraction for him. He was tired of the wordy renunciation of the Manichees, which they coupled with licence, and became more and more a cynical scoffer. At that time nothing seemed to be left to him but out-and-out scepticism. He applied for professorship of rhetoric at Milan, the then residence of the emperor, and got it. There Bishop Ambrosius began to gain considerable influence over him, but it was less of a religious nature or awakening, but chiefly the great admiration for the

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powerful prelate, who seemed to him to be the happiest man alive if he would not have had to renounce the love of women.

The great sceptic and scoffer slowly began to look with different eyes at the Christian message without, however, being able to understand or to appreciate it fully.

During this period his mother wanted him to marry in accordance with his rank and to give up his mistress. She had herself chosen a very young bride for him. The marriage, however, never took place; for too many things had happened outwardly and inwardly that made him follow quite another road, and seemed to give an answer to his troubled and questioning heart.

Through the books of the Neoplatonists he got a clearer idea of the spiritual and the Divine unity in spite of the existence of good and evil and a vision of unsensual love, thus more and more undermining the deep-grained resistance against the Christian message and the Christian church. His sudden conversion, so widely known in all the world, took place in his Milan garden, when he heard from the neighbouring house the strange cry: 'Tolle, lege'—Take, read!—pronounced by the voice of a boy or a girl. But we had better give the reader the description of this event in his own words:—

'Our lodging had a little garden, which we were allowed to use as well as the whole house; for the master of the house, our landlord, was not living there. There the tumult of my breast hurried me, where no man might be an obstacle to the burning struggle I had engaged on against myself, until it should end as Thou knowest, but not I. Only that I was distraught for my well-being, and dying for my very life, conscious how evil I was, unconscious what a good thing I was shortly to become. I ran into the garden, and Alypius hurried after me. And my seclusion did not seem broken by his presence. Or how could he forsake me when I was so disturbed? We sat down as far away as we could from the house. But when deep reflection had drawn and heaped together all my misery in the sig of my heart, from the secret store of memo there arose a mighty tempest bringing a hea downpour of tears. And that I might po it all out with its loud lamentations, I got u from Alypius. Solitude seemed to me best suited to the business of weeping, so I retire so far that even his presence could not be restraint upon me. Thus was it with me, a he was aware of it; for something I supp I had spoken, wherein the tones of my vo appeared choked with weeping, and so h got up. He then remained where we w sitting, lost in amazement. I threw my down, I do not know how, under a cert fig-tree, and gave rein to my tears. And floods of my eyes broke forth, "an accepta sacrifice to Thee". And not, indeed, in th words, yet to this purpose, I spoke much Thee:—"And Thou, O Lord, how lon How long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry, f ever? O, do not remember against us o former iniquities", for I felt that I was h by them. I kept on uttering wretched ex mations:—"How long? How long? T morrow and to-morrow? Why not no Why not this hour make an end of my unclea ness?"—Such words I spoke, weeping in b terest contrition of my heart. And, lo, fro neighbouring house I heard a voice whe of a boy or a girl I do not know, singing repeating:—"Tolle, lege!"—Take, read At once with a changed countenance, I be to think most intently whether boys in kind of game used to sing such words, b could not remember ever to have heard thing like it. So, checking the torrent of tears, I got up; interpreting it to be no o than a Divine command to open the book read the first chapter I should find. For I heard of Antony, that he had happened come in during the reading of the Gospel had taken the passage read as a war spoken to himself:—"Go and sell all t hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt treasure in heaven, and come and follow m and by such an oracle he was at that moment converted to Thee. With such

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inspiration then, I went back to the place where Alypius was sitting, for there I had put the volume of the Apostle, when I got up from there. I seized, I opened, and in silence read that passage my eyes first fell on :—" Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." No further would I read, nor was there any need, for instantly at the end of this sentence as though my heart were flooded with a light of peace, all the shadows of doubt melted away.'

Thus were broken the fetters of Woman and Sex that had kept him in slavery for so many years and with so great a never-ceasing allurement, so that he was able to renounce sensual pleasures and definitely turn towards Christianity at the age of 32.

His friend Alypius, too, wanted to see what the oracle had to tell him, and continuing to read, he found the passage :— 'Now him that is weak in faith, take unto you'—which he considered to be said to him. They had been such close friends for so long, had lived so much in each other's company, had searched together so much and had now received the light of grace together and would henceforth together follow the road leading to Christ.

Augustine became one of the greatest philosophers, theologians and writers of early Christianity, and his 'Confessions' have been translated into many languages and studied in many lands.

While the rage and fury of the Vandals was bringing destruction and misery to great parts of Northern Africa, he died as bishop of Hippo during the siege of that town on 28th August, 430.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

St. Francis was born in September 1182, while his father, Pietro Bernardone, an Assisi cloth merchant, was away in France for business reasons. He was first given the name of John, but on his father's return from France, his parents decided to call him Francis in honour of the nation his father was bound to by family-ties and also by important commercial relations.

His mother, Pica de Bourlemont, belonged to a noble Provencal family. She was very pious, and for a time Francis caused her a good deal of anxiety because of his extreme care-free recklessness, although she never lost her great faith in his fundamental goodness and honesty. There can be no doubt that, however courteous and lovable he was, that strange young man began leading a rather dissipated life, spent money most liberally in innumerable worldly amusements and loved showing himself to his friends as a fearless cavalier, knowing and enjoying the ways of the world, whom nothing could daunt. He was always full of high spirits and of a frank joyfulness which he did not lose even when he was taken prisoner in an encounter between the citizens of Assisi and Perugia. During his imprisonment he became an example of courage and serene resignation to his comrades, greatly helping them in keeping up their spirits.

A year later, after having come back to Assisi, he once more took up his old light-hearted and often a little reckless habits, which may have been the cause of a serious illness that endangered his life for some time.

The story of Francis' conversion has for its centre and setting the little rural church of San Damiano that had fallen into deep neglect and looked more like a heap of worthless stones, than a building erected to the honour of God, standing solitary among the silvery green of the olive trees. Here we find him one day kneeling down in deep recollectedness before a crucified Christ, offering his work, his soul and his whole life to God.

Slowly in the burning fervour of his prayer he began to feel how his heart was being filled with an unearthly sweetness and ecstasy. The dusk of the little church enveloped him in a deep mystic stillness, and suddenly he beheld

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the crucified Christ becoming alive, and heard a divine voice asking him to repair his 'house'.

'Va, Francesco, ripara la mia casa che sta per cadere.' Go, Francis, and repair my house that is about to fall.

At first, Francis took this command literally, believing it to be referring to the dilapidated state of San Damiano. So he set about obeying it, but in a very strange way, for he went and stole—that is at least what ordinary common sense would have called it—from his father's store a quantity of cloth and rushed with it to the neighbouring town of Foligno where he quickly succeeded in selling not only his horse—which he had a perfect right to do—but also the bales of cloth belonging to his father.

Filled with great joy at having sold everything so quickly and profitably, Francis went back to San Damiano and asked the poor priest living there to accept for the love of God the sum he had got and to use it for repairing the poor little church. As he found the priest reluctant to take the money, being afraid of the anger of his parents and relatives, Francis simply threw his purse on the sill of a window and went away considering it to be something vile and useless.

When Pietro Bernardone heard of what his son had done, he rushed furious to San Damiano and asked the priest to hand o the proceeds of the sale.

So, this first attempt at restoring S Damiano came to nothing, but the great w and mission of Francis had begun, though later came to give a different interpretation the words he had heard, taking them to p to the necessary restoration of the Church Christ, 'la mia casa', my house, meaning t and not only to the repair of the little r church of San Damiano, which was after of little importance.

St. Francis' life is too well known to be again as there exists hardly any other Chris saint that has been fascinating and charm the imagination of countless men and wo all over the world and lastingly so down to present day, and whose influence has pro to be so far-reaching and deep.

St. Francis passed away on October 1226, in a humble cell of the Porziunc while, as legend tells us, a strange noise beating and flapping wings was heard, and music of sad thrills in the deep stillness reig all around. They came from the larks of forest, his little beloved sisters, who had co to bring their last greeting to their kind P rello, their loving brother and great saint joy and poetry.

A FEW WORDS CHANGE A LIFE!

An interesting account of sudden conversion is seen in the life of Lala Babu, a noted holy man of the last century in Vrindavan. In the Kasipur garden house of his son-in-law, Gopal Chandra Ghosh, Sri Ramakrishna passed his last days. Lala Babu was very rich and was leading a luxurious life of a normal rich man in Bengal. One day, he was going along the road in a palanquin by the side of a washerman's house. He overheard the daughter of the man calling her father up and saying, 'Father, time goes, set fire to the *vasana*'. The word *vasana* has a double meaning in Bengali: desire; kiln-leaves for cleaning clothes used by the washermen. The girl meant that the day was ending and the washerman must light the oven for boiling the ingredients for cleaning the clothes. But to Lala B the same words carried a different meaning. thought: 'The time goes; it is the evening of life; I must set fire to my desires'. Immedi he left everything and went away to Vrindavan spent his days in the devotional contemplatio God. He earned a great fame as a holy man is remembered by people even now. His temp Jugalkishore with the boy Krishna with flute s Deity still attracts many pilgrims in Vrind Grandson of the well-known Dewan Gangago Sinha, Lala Babu's name was Krishna Ch Sinha. Born in 1775, he left his home in and was initiated by Krishnadas Babaji. He p away in 1822.

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THREE SAINTS OF INDIA

(*Life-changing events*)

RAMLAL

MIRABAI

A sudden change took place in the life of woman-saint Mirabai of Rajasthan. She was born in 1560 of the Vikram era in the village of Kurki of the Merta division of Rajasthan. She was the great-grand-daughter of Rao Jodhaji, the founder of the Jodhpur kingdom and was the daughter of Ratan Singh. From her very childhood, her mind was bent towards devotion. One day a marriage procession was passing on the road leading to her place. The band of musicians were playing upon musical instruments in accompaniment of sweet songs, the marriage-party was well decorated. The bridegroom was seated in a palanquin and looked enchantingly beautiful. The young girl, Mirabai looked downwards from the balcony and cast a glance on the marriage procession.

'Who is my bridegroom?' she asked her parents.

'My daughter, your espouse is Girdhar Gopal, the Lord of Vrindavan,' was the immediate reply.

Having heard the name of Gopal, she fell into trance at once and after coming to senses, she acknowledged Lord Krishna as her bridegroom. Her love towards Krishna increased so much that even He so often blessed her in dreams. The young devotee one night exclaimed :

'Oh dear friend, I was married by the Cowherd Boy—Gopal in dream.
My body was wrapped in bridal cloth dyed red and pink;
My hands were coloured with the paint of myrtle-leaves.

* * * *

Mira says that the Lord wedded her only recently.'

Mirabai, in the true sense of the term, surrendered herself entirely at the feet of her divine Husband, Lord Krishna.

DHARAMDAS

One holy discourse of Saint Kabir turned the course of life of the great medieval Saint Dharamdas who was a rich tradesman of Bandhavagarh situated in Central India. He strictly observed the laws and scriptural principles of the Sanatana Dharma or the eternal religion and never deviated from the path of true and pure life. He was widely known for his catholicity in religious practices and was highly devoted to the reading of scriptures, such as Shrimad Bhagavadgita and other theological books. He did not lack in luxury of life and rich comforts. Once he happened to visit the holy city Mathura where Saint Kabir granted his blessings to him and ultimately he took recourse to renunciation and began to live dispassionately in the world. He got opportunity to meet Kabir on the bank of the holy Jamuna. Kabir taught him in benedictory tone : 'It is not easy to understand the mystery of the attributeless—Nirguna—aspect of God. It is possible only through the grace of the Guru. One should not give up the remembrance of the Almighty Lord even for a moment. It matters little whether life exists or goes away but let the Lord ever remain with you.' Dharamdas got the correct path at once and took the holy dust of the feet of Saint Kabir. He requested him to take him on the other side of the ocean of mundane existence. He exclaimed in right earnest and paid obeisance in the form of the famous song—'*Guru, paiyan lagon Nama Lakha dijo re.*' Dharamdas requested :

'Oh my Guru, I take shelter in your feet
Kindly unveil the mystery of Divine name.
Wake my self with your words, which has been asleep for births.
There prevails darkness in me and the eyes are lightless,
Kindly illumine the lamp of knowledge.

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The waves of poison are active in my body.
Please percolate the drops of nectar.
The river is deep and the currents in motion are beyond crossing,
Kindly steer my boat of life.
I, Dharamdas, invoke your mercy to wharf myself this time.'

Thus the discourse in Mathura awakened Dharamdas from a long sleep and he enrolled himself in the company of the saints and sages, in the real sense of the term. Kabir accepted him as his disciple and had a great affection for him.

KABIR

Kabir, one of the greatest saint poets of Hindi, sought his preceptor in earnest zeal and received the mysterious formula—the divine mantra. In the early part of his life, the weaver saint of Varanasi used to preach and teach people the lessons of spiritual awakening but he could enlist the sympathy of a very poor number of listeners and followers because he was so far not in possession of the mysterious formula from a preceptor in accordance with the scriptural law. Kabir felt it much and tried to consecrate his humble self to the feet of the greatest saint of northern India of the fifteenth century, Swami Ramananda who was not willing to take him into his because of his being born in a low ca Swami Ramananda was accustomed to his bath in the early morning daily at Panchganga Ghat in the Ganges at Varan One day Kabir laid himself down at one the stairs of Panchganga ghat. The godd of dawn was bidding good-bye to the d night; no sooner had Swami Ramananda ped forward towards the Ganges than Ka came under one of the wooden sandals of Swami who exclaimed 'Ram Ram' in sympathy with the trodden object and Ka thus got the mysterious formula and declar himself to be a disciple of Swami Ramanan who was much delighted to come to kn about the true faith of the weaver, Kabir him. Through the grace of the great Achar Kabir was welcomed as an acknowledg saint by a large number of his followers disciples. Saint Kabir contributed much the development of spiritual literature Hindi and his famous book '*Beejak*' is wid read throughout the length and breadth Indian peninsula. He was a saint of univer fame. Saint Kabir pointed towards one G —Saheb, the indwelling spirit and preac one religion of love for the all-perva supreme Being and his devotees and lover

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TWO MUSLIM SAINTS

(*Notable events*)

N. B. CHATTERJEE

RABIA

Rabia-al-Adawaiyya was born at Basra in the 8th Century A.D. of poor parents who died in her childhood. As a child, she was kidnapped and sold as a slave. Even as a slave, she was devoted to God and given to worship and prayers. It is said that one night while she was offering her prayers, her master saw a bright light over her head. He was amazed at that sight and had no doubt that Rabia was one of God's elect and he gave her libe Being free, Rabia dedicated herself heart soul to God and spent her time in pove austerities, asceticism, meditation and pray

According to Rabia worship of God sh be for the realisation of God only and not the bliss and enjoyment in a future life. I said that one day Rabia was seen run with fire in one hand and water in the ot When asked about the meaning of her ac

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she replied, 'I am going to set the Paradise on fire and flood the Hell with water so that both (that is the craze for Paradise and the fear of Hell) may cease to obscure the vision of pilgrims and that people may worship God without any hope or fear. No one would worship the Lord or obey Him, if the hope of Paradise and the fear of Hell did not exist. I have served Him only for the love of Him and out of desire for him.'[1] Rabia used to say in her prayers, 'O my Lord, if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee for the hope of Paradise, exclude me thence. But if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty.'

She had chosen God as the Beloved of her soul as is nicely brought out in the following poem composed by her:

> I have made Thee the companion of my heart,
> But my body is available for those who desire its company,
> And my body is friendly towards its guests,
> But the Beloved of my heart is the guest of my soul.

Rabia is described by her biographers as that woman who lost herself in union with the Divine and the one accepted by men as a 'Second Spotless Mary'. She can also be compared to Mira Bai, the woman saint of India, who had similarly identified herself with God as her beloved. Rabia died in the year 185 A.H. (801 A.D.).

JUNAID

Junaid, one of the great exponents of Sufi mysticism, was born in the year 232 A.H. at Baghdad. Even as a child, he was exceptionally intelligent. When grown up, he established a business of glasswares, but his spare hours were spent in the pursuit of knowledge and thinking. For thirty years, he continued this life. His habits and goodness of character created some enemies, who poisoned the ears of the Khalif against him. The Khalif, seeking for some occasion to disgrace Junaid, asked one of his royal slave girls to dress up in her best and approach Junaid with the following couched appeal, 'Sire, my heart is turned cold to the affairs of the world. Henceforward, I long to remain at thy feet, take instructions from thy holy lips and serve thee as the meanest of thy servants.' The Khalif also instructed one of his servants to follow the slave girl secretly and report to him what was the behaviour of Junaid towards that girl. The girl did as ordered by the Khalif. When she approached Junaid, he was in meditation, but seeing the girl, he raised his head and looked at her beautiful face with a heavy sigh. The girl could not bear this silent reproach and was so affected by it that she fell down at Junaid's feet and breathed her last. When the servant deputed by the Khalif went back and reported to him what had happened, the latter was extremely repentent for his mischievous trick to entrap an innocent and pure soul. This incident, however, established the reputation of Junaid, who now began to preach religion among the people. Later, he and his sufi followers were, as a result of the conspiracy of their enemies, summarily ordered by the Khalif to be executed but before the order was carried out, the Khalif was moved by their piety and ordered their trial as heretics before the Qazi. They were eventually acquitted by the Qazi.

[1] Readings from the Mystics of Islam—by Margaret Smith.

"The movement of the mystic consciousness towards this consummation is not merely the sudden admission to an overwhelming vision of Truth: though such dazzling glimpses may from time to time be vouchsafed to the soul. It is rather an ordered movement towards ever higher levels of reality, ever closer identification with the Infinite."

(EVELYN UNDERHILL: *Mysticism.*)

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Y. N. SUKTHANKAR

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was born at Kamarpukar on the 18th February 1836. His parents were Khudiram Chattopadhyay and Chandra Devi. Both parents of fine character and great spirituality, they named him Gadadhar. He entered Mahasamadhi on 16th August 1886. In his short span of 50 years, he worked wonders, whose full and cumulative effect has not worked out even now. To gain a full appreciation of his wonderful, nay, miraculous achievements, it is necessary to have some idea of the times in which he was born. Those times represented the hey-day of the British power. The Indian Mutiny, or, as it is called in the national circles, the War of Indian Independence, was over in 1857. Since then the British had been successfully consolidating their power. It was not only their military strength which impressed the people but they were gradually conquering the soul of India. The full effects of the Industrial Revolution in England had begun to make themselves felt. The technical inventions had helped the industries to make a notable progress. The country, which only a few years back was rent by internecine war, was now being quickly unified. Railways, posts and telegraphs, roads were making it possible for the Government to centralise its rule and get a better grip over the people. All these changes made a tremendous impression on the minds of the people and their thoughts were gradually turning from faith and religion to science and materialism. This change was not confined only to a few sections of the public but was almost country-wide. The educated classes were, of course, completely overwhelmed by the progress of science and materialistic urge. They cut themselves off completely from their old moorings. Religion was looked upon as superstitious folly and it was being sought to replace the Indian way of life which was condemned out of hand by imitations of European way of life. B it was not only these so called modern cir but even orthodox people who had not co pletely lost their regard for their religi beliefs found something greatly to admire the law and order introduced by the Brit Life was becoming systematised. Law co were being established and it was possible get the wrong-doer punished. Education w spreading, new offices were being opened which offered opportunities of employment those who belonged to the middle classes. A this was chalked up to the credit of the B tish and the new institutions which they h introduced into India. It was argued that th strength and success originated from their re gion, Christianity, and the missionaries, kno ing full well that when occasion required th would be fully backed up, gave unstinted su port to Government and did their very be to foster this belief. They propagated Chr tianity and ridiculed the existing religi beliefs of which there was a multiplicity India. The education itself did not seek pa cularly to encourage spiritual or cultu proclivities of the students. The main obj of the education was to fit the students the jobs which the British wanted to be fi up quickly in order to make their administr tion a going concern. It was at this juncti that Sri Ramakrishna first came to Calcutta 1852. He was about 16 then and his el brother, Ram Kumar, who was occupied w his priestly duties, required his presence th In addition to his work as priest, Ram Kum had opened a Sanskrit Academy and he hop that Gadadhar would slowly be interested education. While Gadadhar took seriously his duties as a priest and took up this w for a number of families in Calcutta, he not pay much attention to education. elder brother's admonition produced no eff

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The conditions of the city life as he found them frightened Gadadhar. In fact, they created a feeling of revulsion in him. To Ram Kumar's warning about his slackness as a student Gadadhar retorted that he wanted nothing to do with mere bread winning education. Ram Kumar painted bright pictures of the future of the successful scholar but this hardly had any effect on Gadadhar. In 1855 a rich widow named Rani Rashmani belonging to the Sudra caste had built a fine temple at Dakshineswar, about 4 miles north of Calcutta. This was a magnificent temple with 20 acres of land attached to it. The idols worshipped in this temple were not only the Divine Mother Kali but Shiva and Radhakanta. Born as he was in an orthodox Hindu family, Gadadhar had some compunction in taking up his duties as a priest at the Dakhineswar temple owned by a Sudra woman when this proposal was made to him. Eventually, however, he accepted the post and here he began with the worship of Kali, a severe and prolonged practice of Sadhanas which eventually made Sri Ramakrishna a renowned saint. In the course of this practice Sri Ramakrishna had a multiplicity of visions. He had visions even in his early days as a boy in the village of Kamarpukar. To Sri Ramakrishna the worship of Kali did not just consist of rituals. His worship was something real and living and to him the idol was a presence. He used to talk to Her and believed that She talked to him. He used to laugh and joke with Her and sometimes coaxed Her and threatened Her. He was so carried away by the worship that even the daily ritual was not performed with strict attention to all the details. Apart from this worship, he started deep and prolonged meditation in the thick jungle to the north of the temple. He started spending practically the whole night in meditation returning to his room only in the morning. With this increasing love of God, there was a corresponding increase in his forgetfulness of the formalities and proprieties of worship. He sat for hours in front of the image singing devotional songs composed by Kamalakant and Ram Prasad in honour of the Mother. These songs described a vision of the God and this heightened Sri Ramakrishna's longing to see the God in flesh and blood. His behaviour gradually became abnormal and he gave up food and sleep. He was soon, however, rewarded. One day he became so desperate that he did not think life worth living any longer. He took a vow in the Mother's temple and resolved to end his life. Just at that time when he seized the sword he was rewarded with a vision of the Blessed Mother. According to his description he was confronted with a limitless, infinite, effulgent ocean of consciousness in place of the temple buildings. He collapsed and became unconscious. He was not aware of what was happening all round but inside he felt a steady flow of indescribable bliss. When he came to himself, he just said 'Mother'.

This vision, however, did not put an end to Sri Ramakrishna's devotion or Sadhana. It is not known when and how the name Gadadhar was changed into Ramakrishna. It is, however, believed that the name was given to him by Mathur Babu, son-in-law of Rashmani Devi. His first vision only increased his longing for the continuous presence of the Mother but this was not granted to him. So Ramakrishna became miserable, started weeping bitterly and sometimes went into trance on these occasions. The Mother showed Herself to him again and smiling to him graciously consoled and told him to be of good cheer. He had various other spiritual experiences. He would hear strange sounds, he would see flashes of light. He had by now given up completely all formalities of worship. He would often offer the flowers to himself and then offer them to the Goddess. He would stroke the chin of the idol to express his affections for the Goddess. The idol became such a living presence to him that he was continuously chatting, laughing and joking with her. He would take the food to her mouth and insist on her eating it. As a result of this behaviour, the temple officials concluded that he had lost his senses and his friends took him to doctors but no medicine would cure his divine mad-

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ness. He constantly invoked the Goddess to teach him as he was ignorant of the Mantra and scriptures. He often referred to Her as his own refuge and guide. He now saw the divine Mother everywhere, in animals, in different persons, good, bad or indifferent. He even fed the cat with food which was intended for the Goddess. This was too much for the temple manager and he made a complaint to Mathur Babu about Sri Ramakrishna's insanity. But Mathur Babu knew better and he told the manager to leave him alone. A report of his behaviour reached Kamarpukar and his poor old mother was very much frightened. She insisted on his return to the village which he did. There he showed no interest in his friends of the earlier days and continued his meditation in the cremation ground of the village. His family thought that marriage might cure him. Accordingly marriage was arranged and he was married to Saradamani, a little girl of 5, living in a village called Jayarambati, not very far off from Kamarpukar. After spending about a year and a half at Kamarpukar, Sri Ramakrishna went back to Dakshineswar. On his return he became no better. His Sadhana was intensified and he added new forms to it. He now insisted on eradicating greed and lust. He, therefore, held a coin in one hand and dust in the other and repeated to himself the equation that the two were just the same. He used to transfer the coin and the dust from one hand to the other and finally throw them both in the Ganges. As regards women, he considered them all as a manifestation of the divine Mother. He, therefore, was completely free from any lust impulses. To crush his pride as one belonging to superior caste he cleaned a Pariah's house with his own long hair. At Rashmani's death in 1861, her son-in-law, Mathur, who became the sole executor of the estate, became still more attached to Sri Ramakrishna and began to look after him. Sri Ramakrishna now had several gurus, the first of whom was a Brahmin woman. The Brahmani became very fond of Sri Ramakrishna and took great care of him thinking of him as 'Baby Krishna'. The Brahmani was so impressed by his ecstasies that she totally f got that she was his teacher and came to lo upon him as an Avatar. After Brahmani had other teachers, such as, Jatadhari, To puri. All these teachers were soon comple satisfied about the high spiritual stage wh Sri Ramakrishna had reached. He was abl achieve only within a few days what had ta them years. He then undertook further d ciplines. He practised Mohammadanism a Christianity. During this period he kept co pletely away from the temple and behaved all respects as if he was a Muslim and a Ch tian. Within a few days he realised the tr as is expounded by these two religions a he had visions of the founders of these t religions. All these severe austerities und mined his health and in 1867 Sri Ramakrish returned to Kamarpukar for the sake of h health. His old friends were happy to h him back, but he was no longer as playful a jolly as he was in those days. His wife Sara Devi, now 14 years old, soon joined him Kamarpukar. She, however, fully apprecia the high stage of spirituality that he had rea ed and instead of dragging him down to c nal life, wanted him to teach her and put h on the path of spiritual development. H gladly accepted her as his disciple and sp tual companion. Soon after this, he acco panied Mathur Babu with a large party of persons and set out on a pilgrimage. Ramakrishna visited Banaras, Brindab Mathura and other places. Mathur B wanted him to visit Gaya but Sri Ramakrish declined to do so. He recalled his fath vision in Gaya before his birth and felt t if he visited the temple of Vishnu there would be completely absorbed in God. 1872 Sarada Devi joined him at Dakshines She had heard rumours about his insanity decided that her place was with him and must be near him to look after him and p tect him. Sri Ramakrishna gladly took up duty of instructing his young wife not only spiritual matters but even as regards cer mundane duties, such as house-keeping, h to trim a lamp, how to behave towards pe

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of different temperaments and how to conduct herself before visitors. In the spiritual domain he taught her how to pray, how to meditate, how to do japa and how to do deep contemplation and enter Samadhi.

From this somewhat detailed description of the Sadhanas he practised we can form some idea of his mental make-up. Firstly, his devotion to God was not something mechanical or formal. It was a deep, genuine devotion and he wanted to meet the Mother face to face. Secondly, although he was an illiterate person and had received no education of any kind, he had a scientific mind. He was not prepared to accept anything unless it was proved to his satisfaction. He, therefore, refused to be satisfied with one or two spiritual experiences of howsoever high an order but he went on and on graduating from one experience to another. Thirdly, his mind was catholic although he was born in a strict orthodox family. He was not a bigoted Hindu following rigidly the tenets of his religion. He wanted to test the truth of other religions and did it in the most practical manner. He was satisfied of their truth when he found that they took him exactly to the place which he had reached in his own religion as the result of severe Sadhana. Fourthly and finally, he had come to the unassailable conclusion that no spiritual heights could be reached unless lust and greed were completely conquered.

He now came in contact with several intellectuals such as Keshab Chandra Sen, one of the prominent leaders of the Brahmo Samaj and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, an erudite scholar, several Brahmo leaders such as Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, Vijay Krishna Goswami and Shivanath Sastry. These contacts made Sri Ramakrishna widely known and the younger generation, educated and restless, began approaching him. During his practice of Sadhana he often climbed to the roof of an isolated building in the garden and cried at the top of his voice, 'Come, my children. Oh! I can't bear to live without you.' This was his call to the devotees whom he had seen in his earlier visions. These now started coming to him and the younger generation included Narendranath Dutta, later known as Swami Vivekananda, and others who later became monks and joined the Order of Monks known as Ramakrishna Mission. A number of householder-devotees also came to him, such as Balaram Bose, Girish Ghosh and Mahendranath Gupta, better known as 'M', who recorded in his diary Sri Ramakrishna's conversations with devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna now entered upon a period of talks and discourses aimed at instructing all those who flocked to hear him. Although devoid of education or scholarship, he was able to answer in simple terms the most complicated philosophical questions. In his talks he did not follow the Socratic method by countering questions with other questions but talked simply and lucidly and often in the form of parables. His teachings, based not on book learning but on real burning experience, were most effective and whatever he said went home. He carried on uninterruptedly his talks right till his end. Even in his last illness when he was warned to keep quiet and not to talk much as this worsened the cancer in the throat from which he was suffering, he declined to rest. He said he had already given his mind to the Mother and had no use for this filthy bag of bones, which was his description of the body. It may go now or go later but nobody who had come to talk to him and to listen to him must be turned away.

I have so far described the times in which Sri Ramakrishna was born, the severe disciplines that he went through and his emergence as a renowned teacher. It was his teachings which, in the first instance, withstood and turned back the onslaught of the materialistic West in India. He conclusively proved that there was nothing permanent in this world, everything was liable to perish. These different manifestations were really the Mother's 'Maya'. The only way to conquer it was by ignoring self, by eliminating greed and lust. There was, however, nothing dismal or grim about his teachings. He did not want people

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to give up the world, as he has said: 'The Mother's play must go on but all that you must do is to see that you are not so entangled in it that you forget who and what you are really.' Even to his worldly disciples he did not prescribe any strict regime. To Girish Ghosh he advised a number of things but knowing Girish's complete incapability of putting into practice any of the lessons he finally advised Girish to give him the 'power of attorney'. Sri Ramakrishna is thus a strange boatman who does not want you to come down the flight of steps of a particular ghat to reach his boat. He will not haggle with you about the tariff. He is prepared to take you on anywhere on the sandy beach. You could even walk up to him through the waters for if you are alone to founder he will pull you into his boat and ferry you across the ocean of the worldly life. It may be asked how far his teachings are of any use in 1960, when conditions are so totally different from what they were the 1870's and 1880's. It is true that the conditions are somewhat different now as compared with the 19th century. England was the only country that mattered then; she was at the height of her glory; people had intense faith in science, as the first fruits of scientific invention were most impressive like the steam engine, posts and telegraph. Religion had become a by-word. Since then England has lost her position as the leading nation in the world. Two crippling wars played havoc with her fortune although she has since made herself prosperous again. The world now is divided between two blocs in which the leading countries are America and Russia, each in its respective bloc. Science, in spite of or perhaps because of the very progress it has made, has lost its former dominating position. Scientific discoveries have progressed so well that they almost spell the ruin of the world. Science may well destroy the mankind if a further single wrong step is taken by the beneficiaries of science. Religion, not necessarily the ritualistic forms but its spiritual content, has come once again to be held in respect and yet there is no doubt that as the inventions resulting from scientific and technological discoveries multiply, life is becoming more materialistic. According to certain ideologies even now this material life is the be-all and end-all. Christianity does no longer derive the admiration that it used to as the best religion from the materialistic success achieved by its followers. The two wars have clearly shown that the Christian virtues are really not practised by the followers of Christianity. Greed, arrogance, hatred and hypocrisy were really the prime causes of the two wars and if left unchecked, may yet bring about a third war. Any occasional slackening of tension in the world is really not due to any reduction in the material outlook or acceptance of any spiritual creed but to the vague fear that once the death-dealing rockets and ballistic missiles are launched it would mean almost the total destruction of the world including those who attack and those who defend. There is no doubt, therefore, that if there is to be real and permanent change in the world's situation, this can be brought about by appreciation and acceptance of the importance of and the unwavering truth underlying Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. Fortunately, although Sri Ramakrishna entered Mahasamadhi as far back as 1886, his disciples starting with the great Swami Vivekananda have organised themselves into Ramakrishna Missions and Maths almost all over the world which are giving practical effect to his teachings. These have not only kept alive his spiritual teachings by means of a large number of publications but have given effect to them in a concrete shape by means of their beneficent activities. It may, therefore, be said that Sri Ramakrishna is alive even today. He is still calling his children to come to him as he cannot bear to live without them. The Great Master, the Great Boatman is waiting for us even today. All that we have to do is to listen to his call and make a move to be one step nearer to him. If that happens to any one of us here, we shall not have celebrated his birthday in vain.

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THE CHRISTIAN IMPERATIVE

FLOYD H. ROSS *

In a recent discussion of the Christian missionary enterprise, a writer in the Christian Century stated: 'Above all, Christianity should not forget that it alone has the divine promise.'[1] This has been a common assumption underlying much missionary work.

Let us assume for the moment that the assumption is entirely false. We shall then properly label it an example of straightforward dogmatic affirmation which is no more self-evident to a non-Christian than the Roman Catholic dogma of the primacy of Peter is self-evident to a non-Catholic. Dogmatic affirmations are only self-evident to those people who already believe because of other factors which are rarely articulated. Even if the dogma be true, there is no way of establishing it empirically. And whether true or untrue, this is a dangerous era in which to shout 'special chosenness' from the housetops. While it may have been the standard formula of many Christian writers in the past, it indicates defensiveness regarding *beliefs* in God but a paucity of faith in God.

If we surrender the absoluteness of Christianity and approach history with the assumption that grace is in *all* history (as Berdyaev and Tillich are frank to admit), have we surrendered all grounds for effective missionary activity? The answer would seem to be a clear *no*. We simply place ourselves in a situation where we can take *all* history seriously. Most Christian philosophers talk about taking history seriously: it turns out that what they actually mean is to take only *one segment* of history seriously — namely, Jewish-Christian history. Some of the earlier Christian teachers began to feel their way out of this unhealthy egocentric predicament; such as Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Scotus Erigena. But they were swimming against the ecclesiastical current, and several were belatedly served with weighty anathemas years after they were in their graves. The others were ignored. When non-Semitic categories were finally made a definite part of the medieval synthesis in the form of Christianized Aristotelianism, they were carefully subordinated to the Semitic and juristic categories of Rome, and the church went on claiming that Christianity alone had the divine promise.

This is to take neither history nor God seriously.

There is no overwhelming evidence that God works through any one historical channel, or idiom, or tradition more potently than through others. Who of us dares to try to measure such imponderables? Indeed there is ample evidence that the God of history works through no one of our experiences or traditions with anything like transparency. There is a place in every life for admitting that man sees through a glass darkly. All history is value-laden, showing marks of teleology, of purposive growth, of new creations, of rebirth. And all history is laden with dis-values, irrational surds, unresolved contradictions.

This means we are all co-seekers, co-finders, co-workers. Thus in *principle*, the grounds of Christian missionary activity are no different from the grounds of non-Christian missionary activity. Each religion has its own genius and its own idiosyncracies. Each is the result of a kind of divine-human encounter: historical factors, personal struggles, cosmic confrontation, human needs and human aspirations. Each group feels it has something to offer. Each group also has something to learn.

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[1] *The Christian Century*, p. 1104. Article, 'Paganism Unshaken in Japan'. by R. A. Egon Hessel. September 21, 1949.

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There are human needs to be met, but no one way of meeting them. In the give-and-take processes of human togetherness, man finds something of meaning, purpose, God. Life comes into clearer focus for a person whenever certain subjective and objective conditions converge (i.e., are 'right'). There is no evidence that any religion or religious symbol has a corner on the ability to produce or encourage such a coming into focus. When we deal with generalities, we may think we see significant contrasts; when we become more specific, it is hard to prove a case (especially in view of the human tendency to see the virtues of our own religion as central but the virtues of the other man's religion as peripheral).

But what of the alleged uniqueness of Christianity? Every movement, in a sense, like every person, is unique. But every person is most unique when he is least self-conscious about comparison with other selves. Herein lies the danger in all attempts to prove the superiority of Christianity over other religions. All comparisons must be quite tentative, exploratory, and made with an explicit recognition on the part of the comparer that it makes a lot of difference with what purpose one compares, or from what angle he points his camera. I illustrate by reference to the issue of personalism versus impersonalism. It is commonly asserted that Christianity's superior virtue lies in the fact that it is personalistic whereas the religions of the Orient are impersonalistic. A minimum non-controversial answer to the Christian theologian at this point might well be: it depends upon what aspects of human experience you are interested in throwing light on at any particular moment. A Christian psychotherapist, dealing with an emotionally distraught person, might interpose a demurrer. The neurotic personality, in our culture at least, is a person who has failed at the level of his personal relatedness — his relatedness to himself, to parents, to business associates, to his God. He peoples his universe with personal forces but in a sick fashion. He 'personalizes' the restricting or frustrating factors in a thoroughly subjective, egocentric way; he has reverted to the level of animism. This 'personalizing' process may express itself in a wide variety of ways: conceptualizations of evil spirits, evil-intentioned persons, or just as possibly in self-deprecatory assertions of guilt, depravity, or sinfulness. In a culture conditioned by Semitic categories of over-personalized theism, the sick person feels an aggravated sense of alienation from the Father God. To such a person, a personal God is initially no help but a threat. Personalistic theism, with its rich anthropomorphic imagery, gives to a Paul, an Augustine, or a Luther a bundle of emotionally-freighted concepts which only intensifies the struggling soul's emotional instability. I refer to such typical judgmental-juristic concepts as sin, guilt, judgment, blame, condemnation, merit, satisfaction, justification. Such externalized transactional categories can hardly creatively promote emotional health and spiritual stability which at bottom are matters of coherence, integration, healthy internationalization, relatedness.

Interpersonal relations can be redeemed apparently only through a de-personalizing and re-personalizing process, which starts with the discarding of projected animistic and personalistic categories (categories which, in their emotional overtones at least, would seem to be more a reflection of emotional confusion and an inability to relate oneself personally to other selves in creative ways than an objective attempt at describing the nature of ultimate reality). One must gain enough insight to utilize the resources which are quite naturally his, and one must leave off taking refuge in elaborate conceptualizations of the outside forces which are allegedly holding him back. The more mature a person becomes, the less he will tend either to manipulate other selves or God, or seek solace through sacrificing his will to the will of another (even the 'Will of God'). Furthermore, as one's individual life comes into clearer focus in terms of mundane personal interrelationships, there is a lessening of the internal pressures which lead one to attempt definite formulations regarding alleged personal powers in the cosmos, or to

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upon personalized cosmic sheltering arms. In other words, from the standpoint of psychotherapy, the concept of the Law of Karma (a law of cause and effect relationships) may have more instrumental value than the concept of a personalized God.[2] It may even lay the foundation for a 'doctrine of grace' much more profound or functionally relevant than that provided by Semitic-Romanized categories of jurisprudence.

If the above comments have any validity at all, they illustrate my initial comment regarding superiority; viz., alleged superiority is always relative to a specific context, and to the needs of specific persons at specific stages in their own spiritual unfoldment.

The religious quest — the human quest — is for wholeness of life. Every vital religious tradition provides or at least suggests plural ways of attacking the problem of self-actualization, God-realization, salvation (call it what you need to). The Hindus long ago recognized three distinct types of approaches (karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga). Each approach, technique, or vehicle is of value only to the extent that it serves as an instrument of further growth. Hence there can be no such thing as an absolute theology or an absolute religion. Every religion to the extent that it encourages vital exploration in the life of the spirit will precipitate significant processes in the other religions with which it comes into contact. A generous exchange of honest seekers between the various religions is thus highly desirable.

Kafka wrote: 'All human error is impatience, a premature renunciation of method, a delusive pinning down of a delusion.' To paraphrase Lao-tze, man needs to become sick of his sickness, the attempt at formulating final answers. If the human quest is for wholeness or God, it is not too important what partial signposts or symbols we use along the way to stake out our own path. For in any case it is a pilgrimage of the faithful, and not a pilgrimage of 'the Faith'.

[2] Gautama Buddha was a clinical psychologist of the first magnitude; it was not without cause that he rejected the prevailing theistic concepts of his day in behalf of a more functional clinical approach. He rejected personalized metaphysics in favour of the person.

BRAHMACHARYA

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA

Brahmacharya is peace and confidence, celibacy and continence, love of truth and sacrifice of self. Brahmacharya is next to Godliness.

Brahmacharya is sober counsels and ingenuous actions, sincere principles and unprejudiced understanding, holy prayers and spiritual comfort.

Brahmacharya is the essence of virtue. Brahmacharya is chivalry. Brahmacharya makes the excellency of the mind which in turn makes the body impregnable. Brahmacharya is not only the privilege, the honour and the duty of a *sadhaka* but also is his security and safety. Brahmacharya enables the soul to breathe a pure air even in the foulest places.

Brahmacharya is the brightest jewel in the crown of one's life. Brahmacharya, in a chaste thought, word and deed, is the mother of wisdom and deliberation. Brahmacharya is the mind's sweetness having its operation upon the body, clothes and habitation.

Says Sri Krishna that one should be with a heart serene, fearless and firm in the vow of Brahmacharya. *Yadichchhanto brahmacharyam charanti* — that desiring which Brahmacharya is performed. *Trividham narakasyedam dwaram nasanam atmanah, kamah krodhastatha lobhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet* — O

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Arjuna! Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self — lust, wrath and greed; therefore, let man renounce these three. *Brahmacharivrate sthitah* — To be established in the vow of Brahmacharya — *The Gita.*

Brahmacharya is *sine qua non* (of vital importance), and a great *desideratum* (a thing mostly desired). Brahmacharya is the sum and substance of yoga and is one of the requisites for the austerity of the body (*sariratapas*).

In Raja Yoga the first step is the practice of *ahimsa* (non-killing), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-receiving of gifts).

In Jnana Yoga Brahmacharya is self-control and is the foundation for the spiritual life of an aspirant. It is a divine word to attain the goal spoken of by the knowers of Veda.

Raso vai sah — God is *rasa*. *Rasa* is *veerya* (vital fluid or semen). *Rasohyeyam labdhva anandi bhavati* — By not wasting *rasa* or *veerya*, eternal bliss is attained. In Yoga the semen becomes transmuted into *Ojas shakti*. And there will be charm and grace in the Yogi's movements.

Brahmacharya means the control of semen and study of scriptures under a *guru*; in other words, *achara* (conduct of life). *Acharah prathamo dharmah* — the first and foremost duty of a Brahmachari is the attainment of *achara* which aids to reach Brahman.

Yajnavalkya defines: *kayena manasa vacha sarvavasthasu sarvada, sarvatra maithunatyago — brahmacharya prachakshate* — Brahmacharya is abstaining from *maithuna* (all sexual enjoyment) for ever, in all places and in all conditions, either physically, mentally or in words.

Brahmacharya is endurance and bravery, cultivation of chastity, strict abstinence from sexual perverse practices, from autoerotic manifestations, from masturbation, from homosexual acts and from indulgence in erotic imagination and voluptuous reverie.

Brahmacharya is the master-key to open the realms of bliss eternal. Brahmacharya is a fine and fragrant flower that exhales immortality from its petals. Brahmacharya is a potent weapon for waging war against internal and external *asuras* (devils). Brahmacharya is a perennial joy in the physical, mental and spiritual advancement in life.

Brahmacharya moulds man's character properly since his life and success depends upon the correct formation of his character. The bright luminaries of the world have won their laurels of fame, reputation and honour through the greatness of their character. 'Character is Power' is preferable to 'Knowledge is Power'.

Brahmacharya is the control of all *indriyas* (organs of senses) in thought, word and deed. It is meant for both men and women. Sri Sankara says: Brahmacharya or spotless chastity is the best of the penances. Such a celibate is God indeed!

From food comes juice or chyle; from chyle, blood, flesh; from flesh, fat; from fat, bones; from bones, marrow; and lastly from marrow, semen. *Veerya* (semen) comes out of the very marrow that lies latent inside the bones. These are the *sapta dhatus* supporting life and body.

Semen is the last essence and the essence of essences. One drop of semen comes from 40 drops of blood. The *veerya* is manufactured by the cells of the testes out of the blood and gives colour and vitality to the body and different organs, and also to heart and intellect. It enriches the blood and strengthens the brain.

Therefore all wastage of *veerya* (spermatic secretions), voluntary or involuntary, is a direct wastage of the life-force. A chaste life is essential to man's well-being.

Blessed is the Brahmachari who has taken a vow of celibacy for the end of his life. This is *naisthika brahmacharya*. Blessed is the house-holder who has, after the death of his wife, taken a vow of celibacy for the rest of his life. This is *vidura brahmacharya*.

Blessed is the house-holder who has copulation occasionally for the sake of progeny only, for the sake of bringing forth healthy, intelligent, strong, and self-sacrificing sons

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The wise follow this rule carefully in order to lead the life of a Brahmachari even as a householder.

Birds and animals do teach a lesson to man. Lions cohabit only once in a year. Elephants and other powerful animals have better self-control than man.

It is man that violates the laws of nature and consequently suffers from innumerable diseases. The average life of an Indian is only 22 years as against 50 years of a European in Western countries. Is this not a most disgraceful and disastrous state of affairs prevailing in our country?

Blessed is the Brahmachari who has *akhanda brahmacharya* in the sense that he is always of Brahmic Consciousness — *charati* in Brahman (to live, move and have his being in Brahman). He is *ativarnasrami* (above all distinctions of four *varnas* and four *asramas*).

Man should not be a puppet of passion, or an imitative machine, or an abject form of slavery. There should be control of tongue since there is intimate connection between the tongue and the organ of generation. Stimulate the tongue with *rajasic* food, at once the reproductive organ also gets excited. As such, there should be proper selection and restriction in diet.

Easy to tame a tiger or to play with a cobra, or walk on fire or to uproot the Himalayas, but it is difficult to eradicate *lust*. Have faith in the Almighty. The grace of the Lord can destroy lust in a twinkling of an eye. Mere human effort will not do. The Divine Grace is needed. God helps those who help themselves.

The Siva Samhita says: *maranam bindupatena jivanam bindudharanat* — Death is hastened by letting out semen from the body; life is saved and prolonged by preserving it in the body.

The Srutis declare: *naayam atma balaheenena labhyah* — This atman (Self) is not attainable by a weak man.

Brahmacharya contributes tremendous energy, clear brain, gigantic will-power, retentive memory, right understanding and keen discrimination (*vichara shakti*).

On the whole Brahmacharya paves the way not to be lost in the world of many but get to the simplicity of the One. Brahmacharya paves the way for the intimate relation between the truth of philosophy and the daily life of an individual and thus makes religion alive and real. Brahmacharya paves the way for *Brahma-vidya-pratistha*, the science of the eternal as the basis of all sciences. Brahmacharya paves the way for the well-being of India by raising her high in the scale of nations.

Brahmacharya is the essence of thought, intelligence and consciousness. The children of Mother India, both male and female, should understand the supreme importance of Brahmacharya by their study in all its bearings and by their practical application in their lives.

Education in schools, colleges and universities should be based on the principles of Brahmacharya for the maintenance of good health, strength and a high standard of vitality.

Brahmacharya is the corner-stone of the edifice of true manliness. Brahmacharya gives peace of mind and long life, conserves physical and mental energy, augments vigour and vitality and grants power to face the obstacles in the daily battle of life.

Such indeed is the true significance and glory of Brahmacharya. May the blessings of Brahmacharya ever abide with the readers is the humble prayer of the writer.

The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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THE DEVOUT SINGERS

Rigveda VI. 34 — Metre : Trishtubh

Rishi : Sonahotra, son of Bharadvāja
Devatā : Indra

Many songs have gone together to thee, Indra,
and from thee have proceeded lofty thoughts.
Of old and now the eulogies of sages,
their hymns and songs vie in glorifying thee. (1)

He is much invoked, praised of many, mighty,
the One to be glorified by sacrifices.
As they harness a car for great achievement,
so should we in succession praise Indra. (2)

The hymns and words of prayer do not trouble Indra,
they proceed towards him and glorify him.
Even when hundreds and thousands of singers pray
to him, the song-lover, he finds it good. (3)

In Indra the offered Soma longs to mix
as brightness mixes with the moon in the sky.
Like water to a man in the desert waste
the gifts at sacrifices always please him. (4)

To him this mighty eulogy, to him,
to Indra, this praise has been uttered by poets,
so that in the great battle with Vritra,
Indra, the Life of all, protect and advance us. (5)

—*Translated by* ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE.

NOTE :—

The Vedic Indra should be distinguished from the Puranik. He is Pure :

Come, let us praise Indra, the pure,
with pure Saman hymns . . .
(RV. VIII. 95. 7)

He is also the Hero of heroes. He has been called Father and Mother, Friend, etc.

STANZA 1 : Here we have the typical worship of Bhaktiyoga through music. The Veda believes that worship elevates man.

It is evident that the tradition of musical prayer was very ancient even to the Rigvedic sage.

STANZA 2 : The ritual went side by side with music.

In succession suggests unbroken periods of song, as found in middle ages and modern times.

STANZA 3 : 'Hundreds of thousands of sing points to the vastness of singing congregations the popular nature of the prayer. That the De happy to receive the loving worship of the dev is part of the Bhakti ideology.

STANZA 4 : The Vedic sage's epic concept of included the resolve to fight evil and make prevail, and divine aid was sought for such a fe

STANZA 5 : The idea of the Deity as 'the of all' (*visvayu*) in the devotional prayer co ponds to the idea of the Deity being all, o One Eternal Existence of Jnanayoga (Vedant

Indra symbolises the power of good and that of evil, and the Veda says how Indra pro his *svarajya*, self-dominion ('kingdom of God defeating Vritra. 'The Earth opted for Indra not Vritra', says the *Atharva Veda* else (XII. 1. 37)

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THE UNIQUE IN OUR LITERATURE

N. SESHADRINATHAN

Ours is a continuous culture. There is no break in it. Now and again side growths may arise which may break away and get lost, like the branches of a tree, while the tree itself may continue to grow still nourished by its roots.

This culture is the basis of our tradition. It is impossible to ignore it; so deep are its roots. Some of our people who happened to be taken away from their homes into foreign surroundings at an early age, on their return later on, have been able to adapt themselves again to our traditional culture as readily as fish to water.

Ethics, morality, metaphysics and even science will reach their full heights only if there is a spiritual background. So are art and literature at their best when sustained by a spiritual outlook. While viewing the works of the immortal poet Kalidasa you can see the same spiritual vein running through them all. In *Raghuvamsa* we have ethical ideals; in *Kumarasambhava* a unique mystical background is allied with poetic vigour. Tagore says of *Abhijnana Sakuntala* as follows: 'The motif of the play is the progress from the earlier union of the first act with its earthly unstable beauties and romance, to the higher in the heavenly hermitage of eternal bliss in the last act.' But for the use of the classics in these works they would not have the sustaining quality they have. Tagore's works have obtained world wide recognition, because they embody the ancient culture of our land. In reality they present our culture to the modern world.

Music in our land does not rest on melody alone. Sahityam based on spiritual subjects heightens them. For this reason it is that goddess Saraswati is also the deity of music. Our best musical compositions which have stood the test of time are all outpourings of devotional songs.

Our tradition comes down to us with the puranas. The puranas have remained as our treasure because of their undercurrent of spirituality. The puranas are like the ripe mangoes with a golden hue. The golden hue our eyes and mind covet. The eyes and mind do not deceive us, for the pulp is rich with life-giving juice. We get great satisfaction on eating it. But that is not all. We can sow the seed in good soil and raise a huge tree, or even a garden of mango trees, and continue to enjoy eating mangoes indefinitely. This is what we are doing by using the classics in developing modern writings.

Little children listening to puranic stories derive immense pleasure and scope for their imagination. Youthful people find in them inspiration for courageous adventure. The householder can resort to puranic lore for solving many of his social and domestic problems. Our puranas have knit our society in such a way that it is able to withstand onslaughts from outside and come back readily to normal stability. In old age we are sustained by the solace we get from them and the final journey is made pleasant and acceptable. Old age is burdened with the memory of and the results of karma. Puranic lore helps old age to be relieved of this burden of Karma and its memory.

The kirtans sung by the devotees of God are not the worked-up emotions of an escapist as to an ardent soul thirsting to realise its divine origin. These yearnings are felt by a person, who, after a fulsome career in life, feels the approach of the natural end. To some, these emotional responses may come earlier. The poet sets these emotions to music and obtains a rich satisfaction of mingling the intensity of thought and emotion with the exquisiteness of melody. As Sri Ramakrishna says, having entered the forest to dig for treasure, we may have found silver, but if we go deeper into the forest and dig deeper into the earth we are sure to find gold and precious stones as well. The

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saints have gone deeper into the forest and dug deeper and found the precious stones. Their ecstatic feelings and emotions roused in them the outlet in their immortal songs.

Puranas, which form the backbone of our classics, never stale when retold. The more we listen to them, fresh thoughts and ideas continue to spring from them. They meet the taste of readers and listeners of every age and character. In spite of advancement of science and technology the basic nature of man has not changed. The feelings, fears, hopes and aspirations of civilised man are basically not different from those of primitive man. The evolution of human feelings and emotions from the primitive stage to the civilised level can find parallels in our Puranas. An immense variety of human situations and ideals have been depicted in them.

Therefore, we should not ignore the classics; nor do we need to modify them to suit the modern tastes. The classics can give scope for enjoyment suitable to the individual's mental outlook and mould of culture.

In the fast-moving atmosphere of the modern science and technology the world is filled with anxious, restless individuals and groups and so there is a great necessity for intellectual and emotional relaxation. Puranas, properly read and understood can give this much needed relaxation and balance of mind without the ill-effects of the drugs.

To maintain the spirit of the classics and understand them aright, it is necessary that we should remain in touch with them from our earliest lives, so that classical tradition may become intimately associated with our lives as we grow older. The classics have not suffered very much by translations into the regional languages, and we should take advantage of it and get acquainted with them through these translations at least.

We as a nation have evolved a philosophy of our own which has stood the test of time and the advancement of science. This philosophy forms the undercurrent of our religious scriptures and classical literature. Even the conquest of the planets and stars cannot shake this phi sophy out of us.

Let us take the life of Sri Krishna for illustration. Krishna is not only the darling the devotees, but the darling of the children whom grandmothers have narrated the s of the pranks of Krishna's early days.

To begin with, we find that the birth Krishna is the divine effulgence set agains background of darkness and suffering, and circumstances are full of fear and cruelty. the very outset, the moment He is born, are assured of God's grace. The innocent less baby is transformed into the all-powe Supreme Being to the delight and wonder the anxious parents.

Which mother will not enjoy the mischie pranks of her child with only feigned an ance? Small children may find parallels f their lives in the adventures of Krishna scope for imagination. The story brings h to them that the similar adventures and an ances they may have given to their pa need not make them feel guilty and that all only an evidence of the natural bubb life in them.

The child under five is very often subje to strange irrational fears of giants and o and witches. Krishna's adventures with giants and ogres and witches give these listeners courage to overcome their irrat fears. Such fantastic tales are enjoyed for adventurous nature and for their succe endings. The fears are natural to children amount of poopoohing will help to dispel from their minds. These stories really h healthful effect. The effect is greater whe children are assured that God Himself is to help to destroy these demons of fantasy. Thus the first step towards an a faith in God is taken by the child by list to these stories.

The adventures of Krishna's bo inspire young boys with courage and he at the same time they create a sense of pline and service to the meek and suff The spiritual lesson that they give is not

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dry type catered from the platform, but it is full of life and joy and hope. These stories can be an eternal source of good literature for children.

Coming to the romantic stage in Krishna's life we find that the great Vyasa has exhibited his skill lavishly in imagery and romance. But he has also with consummate skill woven the spiritual skein into it. Young people of the adolescent stage who may be listening to the exploits of Krishna with the Gopis in Brindavan are richly rewarded with romance of the exhilarating spring time, which, however, is restrained by the spiritual colour given to it.

The description of Krishna's Venugana as a pastoral lyric is unparalleled in any other of its kind. The stage is set up. The scene is laid by a pen picture of sylvan beauty. Hills and dales and running rivers and lakes form the background for Brindavan. Flowering trees and plants haunted by humming bees for honey, sparkling brooks with lotus flowers, floral fragrance mingling with the cool breeze make up Brindavan. The hero Krishna is introduced into this scene. He is not alone. His brother Balarama is with him, the Gopalas accompany him with their cows, but he is the central figure. The whole scene with the cowherds and cows, Balarama included, is subordinated to the figure of Krishna. Krishna with the rapturous melody of his flute fixes the attention of every element of the scene on himself. The Gopis of Brindavan are lost in amorous admiration for the central figure of Krishna. When Krishna dances the Gopis and everyone in the scene dances to his tune, the cowherds, the cows, deer, peacocks and other birds all are moved by celestial music from the flute. Krishna being an Incarnation, what else could they do but dance to His tune?

THE IDEA OF GOD

(*Finite or Infinite*)

K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

Regarding the infinity and eternality of God, my view is a bit more complicated than some. For me the question is not what concepts apply to God, for all concepts apply to Him. Of course, God is infinite, but it is just as true that God is finite; He is eternal, and it is just as true that He is something different each time we refer to Him. Of course there is a sense in which the selves are one, but then there is also a sense in which we Hindus believe all selves are *One*. Self-identity has an absolute or strict meaning only for the divine and even there is a sense in which there is a numerically different divine self each moment. I do not deny, I affirm that God is infinite and also that He is finite. But I am not satisfied to say that He is finite in me or in you. He is finite as containing you and me and all selves. We as finite are in Him as finite. The infinite does not contain the finite, for the strictly infinite is potentiality not actuality, capacity to be not being God and only God has absolute infinite capacity to be but nothing whatever can actualise all the infinity of possibility, for this is contradictory, there being as Leibnitz said incompassable possibilities. An 'absolute infinite actuality' in my opinion is words with no coherent meaning. I do not mean that we should attribute contradictory predicates to the divine, but this is where the how of application comes in. To say X is P, and X is not P is a contradiction only if we mean in every respect P and in some respects not P; But if we mean in some respects P and in some (other) respect not P, there is no law of logic against this. God is absolutely infinite in what He actually is, for the simple reason that there are mutually incompatible possible qualities. For instance God can be the God of a creation which contains elephants, or He can be the God of total crea-

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tion never containing elephants; but He cannot be both, for this is nonsense. So in His actuality as creator possessing a definite creation God is finite; but His potentiality as creator and possessor of worlds is strictly infinite. For any thinkable world *might* be his. I shall quote the fundamental passage in Whitehead's 'Process and Reality' (pp. 521-24, 1929, The Macmillan and Co.):

> 'Viewed as primordial, God is the unlimited conceptual realization of the absolute wealth of potentiality. In this respect He is not *before* all creation, but with all creation. God is the principle of concretion.
>
> 'God is also consequent. The completion of God's nature into a fulness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God. The consequent nature of God is conscious; and it is the realization of the actual world in the unity of His nature. The primordial nature is conceptual.'

The primordial aspect is superior in power, the consequent is superior in concreteness or variety. Of course it is a contradiction to say that God is more than absolute; for then He just is not absolute. But it seems characteristic of God to self-limit His absolute power in order to enjoy the company of free selves or souls, for human freedom is a limitation of God, which he has chosen for the world of time a magnificent experiment.

Those who deny this and say that God is simply infinite and only infinite are forced to say that the finite is unreal or at any rate not real for God, not included in His reality. By pretending that God can be strictly infinite in actuality, they merely destroy the meaning of 'actuality' and make this actual world irrelavant to God. But then it follows that in our efforts to increase or improve actuality we can do nothing for God since He has no actuality capable of change or increase. Very well, what are we trying to do? It can only be to increase our own actuality. So we live for ourselves, not for God, our own enjoyment of God, not His enjoyment of us. I live for God's enjoyment, including my enjoyment of Him, but I could not do this if I held that God's enjoyment is an absolutely infinite actuality (whatever that might be, I have no idea and do not believe others do either).

We think we exalt God by applying high sounding attributes to Him like 'infinite', 'absoluteness' but we deceive ourselves. 'Finite' is not 'bad', but 'actual' versus 'potential', being this where that was also possible. If we refuse to limit God's actuality we simply say in effect that He has no potentiality at all. For the actualization of potentiality is what finitude is. But if God's actuality does not realize any potentiality then it is not anything we can mean by actuality, and we are merely saying we know not with the hope that it is complementary. I want to know what I am doing when I praise God, for I want it to be really the praise. And denying Him the privilege of possessing the world in its finite actuality is not my idea of praise. But this possession means nothing unless that God is finite, the God of the actual world, instead of the God of some possible world—as He could have been had that world been actual instead of a mere possibility. God is absolute-relative

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REMINISCENCE OF MAHAPURUSH MAHARAJ

AMULYA BANDHU MUKHERJEE

12th July, 1927. I reached the Math at about 4-20 p.m. Mahapurush Maharaj was seated all alone on a chair in his room. A party of disciples came from East Bengal, accompanied by an old gentleman. The old gentleman said, 'Maharaj, please give us a little advice'. I was at that time fan[illegible] Mahapurush Maharaj.

Mahapurush (absorbed in Bhava): We have got but one counsel to give. Do

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forget Him. This is the only real advice. You are in the world; you stay there. But make it a point not to forget Him. Do all your worldly duties, but take His name in solitude at least once at the close of the day. Never miss it. If you forget this, then everything will go wrong. On the other hand, if you keep Him in remembrance, you will remain unperturbed in weal and in woe. Think of Him constantly. Do japam, at times practise meditation, perform puja, read the scriptures or hold holy discussions. If you divide your time in this manner, God will always be present in your thoughts. Just as there is a scheduled time for doing a work and a necessity too for doing it, so also there is a real urgency for taking the name of the Lord at the end of the day. Take His name, however placed you may be, whenever you get time. Invoke Him with your whole soul. If you pray to Him, He will open all the avenues. Only see that you do not forget to take His name.

Disciple: Why do we forget Him? Why does not the mind turn towards Him?

Mahapurush: Why forget? That is Maya. You are in Maya, and so you forget Him. That is why the mind does not turn towards Him. Things of the world attract the mind.

Disciple: Why does He keep us in Maya? Why is not the mind drawn towards Him?

Mahapurush: You are fond of the things of the world, and so you are entwined in Maya. Do you love God as much as you love the world? And so you have got to exercise your power of discrimination (viveka) in regard to this world of Maya. You need not be told of the transitory character of this material life. Almost every day you see before your very eyes how families are formed and then in a few days dissolved by death. Today it is all pleasure; tomorrow it is all pain. If you analyse all this, you will remember God. You will then think: 'What am I doing? Everything will remain here. Why do I think of it all as so much mine?' If you judge things in this manner, you will see that you have developed a positive dislike for this world and your thoughts will turn towards God.

Disciple: It is this 'I' and 'mine' which creates all the trouble. Day and night we are talking in terms of this 'I' and 'mine'.

Mahapurush: Yes, it is this 'I' which is at the root of all mischief. When true discrimination dawns, the thought of 'I' and 'mine' is not present in the mind. It is then all 'You' and 'Yours'.

Disciple: Well Maharaj, what is this thing called 'mind'? It is this mind which is at the root of all mischief. It can by no means be tamed.

Mahapurush: Yes, above the 'mind' there are Buddhi, Jnana and Atma. But you cannot reach there by overstepping the mind. And so you have got to bring the mind under your control. The Gita speaks of the 'Abhyasa Yoga' (repeated practice). Gradually by repeated practice the mind will have to be brought under submission. It is only then that you will get Him. If the mind does not come under your control, call on Him and pray to Him so that the mind yields. He will set things right. If you invoke Him, everything will be all right. Everything will go right when He is seized upon. Then there will be no further difficulty.

Disciple: Without your solicitude, without Divine grace nothing is to be achieved. Please have a little mercy on us so that we may cross over this ocean of Maya.

Mahapurush: We have kindness; we have nothing else. May you cross this sea of Samsara. I bless you. You will surely get over to the other shore of the sea. Do not fear.

Disciple: Yes, that is what we want, by your grace may we reach the other shore.

Mahapurush: Yes, you will surely tide over this sea of Samsara.

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चरैवेति

MIND'S CONFESSION

In olden days people spoke of the 'natural' and the 'supernatural'. By the former they meant the 'world' of the senses. That is the world where perceptions, plans, actions, and results are limited in various ways. By the 'supernatural' they understood a sphere of existence free from these limitations. With the progress of science, the term 'supernatural' became discredited. With their special 'tools', scientists have considerably widened the extent of their perceptions. Whatever they discover is being included in Nature. Where is then, they ask, the place for the 'supernatural'? There can, however, be a 'scientific' study not merely of what is called 'matter', but also of what is called 'mind'. Steady investigations regarding the powers possessed by the human mind are now opening up new horizons. Some of these powers are grouped under the term, E.S.P., Extra Sensory Perception. Old Indian texts have their own expression: *Atīndriya Jñānam*. Mental recordings of events taking place far beyond the range of the physical senses no doubt come within its scope. But the highest point attainable by this type of 'knowing' is claimed to be the realization of the Supreme Truth, — variously called the Grace of God, the Bliss of Brahman, or the Freedom of the Self. The raising of awareness to this peak depends upon a graded series of exercises. Devotion to progressively higher values, and effective detachment from the familiar network of sense impression and concepts constitute the main items of this 'purificatory' or preparatory discipline. *Gita* (iii. 42-43) gives a brief indication of the 'layers' of control prescribed for all aspirants. First, of course, come the senses. 'But greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is he (the Self).' 'Knowing that which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of Desi that is hard to overcome.'

* * *

We now turn to Philo's advice 'On Ecstasy He addresses the soul and says: 'If thou fe est any yearning to inherit the good things God, leave not only thy land, that is the bo thy kinsfolk, that is the senses, thy fath house (Genesis xii. i), that is speech, but a fugitive from thyself also, and issue fo from thyself.' 'Be filled with inspired fren even as the prophets are inspired.' In order achieve this, to be 'pulled up thereto, w truth to lead the way', 'all obstacles' that in front are to be removed. And what they? One is the mind itself. To it he say 'Fear not to tell us the story of thy departu The mind then answers: 'I migrated from body when I had ceased to regard the fle from sense, when I came to view all the obj of sense as having no true existence, whe denounced its standard of judgment as sp ous and corrupt and steeped in false opinio 'from speech, when I sentenced it to speechlessness, in spite of all its self-exalt and self-pride.' What is the harm don speech or the faculty of using words, au or mental? 'Great indeed was its aud that it should attempt the impossible tas use shadows to point me to substance, w to point me to facts.' Besides, 'it chatt and gushed about, unable to present with expression the distinctions in things.' H as a final step, what did mind decide to 'Thus, through experience, as a foolish learns, I learnt that the better course w quit all these three', viz., body, senses speech. But is it outright rejection or sup sion? No, it says. It learned to 'dedicate attribute the faculties of each to God, who pacts the body in its bodily form, who

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the senses to perceive, and extends to each the power of speaking.' Philo then sums up : 'Such is the mind's confession.' He himself says to it : 'Even as thou hast quitted the others, quit thyself, depart from thyself.' What does this final quitting mean ? It is explained : 'Do not lay up a treasure for thyself, — thy gifts of thinking, purposing, apprehending, but bring them and dedicate them to Him Who is the source of accurate thinking and unerring apprehension.'

Everywhere wise men have prescribed the same disciplines. Can we not remember passages which lay down : 'Let my hands be dedicated for Thy worship, my tongue to chant Thy praises, and my mind to meditation on Thee' ? What is demanded is detachment of every aspect of the personality from lower values and their total dedication to the pursuit of higher ones.

भग चरैवेति।

SUBANDHU

The quotations are taken from *Philo*, by Hans Lewy, East and West Library.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Sri Narayan Chandra Bhattacharya is from Berhampore, West Bengal.

Mr Wolfram H. Koch, is from Switzerland.

Sri Ramlal is Asst. Editor, *Kalyan*, Gorakhpur, U.P.

Sri N. B. Chatterjee is from New Delhi.

The article of Sri Y. N. Sukthankar, I.C.S., Governor of Orissa, has been adapted from his presidential speech on the birthday celebration of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, on 6-3-1960.

Dr Floyd H. Ross from U.S.A. was for some time in India.

Swami Rajeswarananda is Editor, *Call Divine*.

Dr Abinash Chandra Bose is from New Delhi.

Captain Dr N. Seshadrinathan's paper was read in the last All India Writers' Conference at Madras.

Sri K. S. Ramakrishna Rao is Lecturer in Logic, Government First Grade College, Tumkur, Mysore.

Sri Amulya Bandhu Mukherjee is from Calcutta.

PROGRESS THROUGH FREEDOM

India is in ferment. A feverish activity is going on throughout the length and breadth of the country for raising the standard of living for which there is naturally a great hunger among the people. This hunger is common with all other peoples of the world. But what is of urgent necessity in India and other countries of backward economy is food and a definite assurance that the minimum basic necessities of life will be available as soon as possible. Other conveniences can wait. So the entire energy of the nation must be geared to achieving this objective. But India is a democracy with a mixed economy. So there are different levels in the economic development of the people. People in the higher strata expect higher and higher standard of living which compared to richer nations is still deplorably low. To give food to the hungry, and higher standard to the latter or at least to keep them pacified for the time being — these are the two urgencies the leaders have to face, if progress is to be made without losing the freedom.

How to achieve a quick progress is surely a problem. Totalitarianism has shown that it is

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possible to raise the economic condition in a generation to a very high standard. But the difficulty is, the price for it is too much. This price is in the liquidation of all opposition, and in a process involving much suffering and misery. Freedom being the first casualty, totalitarianism is losing its charm. The financially advanced groups are naturally against it. The middle class intelligentsia, who were its great supporters, are becoming afraid of it, as news about the horrors in the process are gradually coming out. In recent days enough information came to light about the ferment and instability in a totalitarian society. An unrelieved atmosphere of suspicion, fear and suspense is too depressing. Moreover, some of the extra-economic moorings including religious aspiration, to which the people paid their homage down the ages in India, have little scope in such a society. Still probably many people would like to give it a trial. But the greatest difficulty is, like the well-known Mahabharata hero, you have the freedom to go in, but not the way to come out. That is the one single factor that has made even the enthusiastic people a little sobre, reflecting and reticent. That many still speak in terms of totalitarianism is due to frustration and a feeling of despair and helplessness with the existing nature of things. That economic progress is possible through democratic methods is being stressed by all the democratic countries. The sobering realization that freedom is as much necessary as improved standard of living has come to many people. The great effort in spotlighting the dangers of totalitarianism and the advantage of freedom that is being made by some of the highly respected leaders, also has created a great impression. But the whole thing depends upon how speedily the square meals at least are provided to the hungry masses and also some security to the educated middle class which really takes the leadership in revolution.

How appalling is the poverty can be seen from an article by Albert Carthy, Secretary of the Socialist International, where he states :

> No statistics can convey the picture of an aboriginal village I visited within a row-boat ride of the great city of Bombay. The household equipment of a whole family consisted of two brass water-pots (scrupulously scoured with sand), a tiny baby's hammock made of two crossed pieces of bamboo and some string, a clay lamp about the size of a fist, and a small paper religious picture. Nothing more. (Impressions of an Asian journey, *Vigil*, May 16, '60.)

India is a huge country. If her vast population is satisfied of hunger and security of a modicum of standard, there is very little likelihood of a total upheaval. But speed is the one desideratum. Unwillingness to work and rampant corruption are two of the greatest impediments to the quick progress. These two will have to be tackled just now by the Indian leaders, about the urgency of which they are of course well aware. The traditional method of inculcating devotion to duty and to moral purity and honesty was through the practice of religion. But many of the political leaders are either anti-religious or pay only lip service to it. Of course there are other factors too. The urgency of the situation requires the whole souled devotion of not only the leaders but also of a large army of officers. But that will not suffice. This intense feeling must pervade the society, if we are to avoid regimentation and abolition of private property and vocation. Will it be possible to do it through mere propaganda? Will it not require to have the quality of human material raised high? That is a task in which religion was engaged. Of course, preaching of religion cannot alone do the job. But it is a very important factor. The relativizing all values by conflicting statements which is very common in democracy and confusing the moral sense of the people at large must be stopped. Otherwise no amount of preaching will be of any avail. The finest chord in human heart must be touched. It is because of this that the Bhoodan movement has made such a tremendous appeal. But confused thinking, regarding this basic idea of individual moral responsibility and purity of means, must be given up and joint effort must be made to touch the nobler sentiments of men. In India centuries of preaching of unselfishness and non-possession had made the poor more

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ent, the rich less covetous, otherwise who could have ever thought of no bloodshed in spite of abolition of the zamindari system or the poor not revolting in spite of extreme hunger? Of course, recently a tendency to change is noticeable. Let not these qualities be shattered by our wrong preaching to serve smaller issues or by being too late in providing the relief. The exhortation of Swami Vivekananda may be a pointer to the leaders of the nation when he definitely said about the primacy of the spiritual values:

> Everything goes to show that socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food. What guarantee have we that this, or any civilisation, will last, unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right.
>
> I claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of religion but because that religion has not been applied to society as it should have been. This I am ready to prove from our old books, every word of it. This is what I teach, and this is what we must struggle all our lives to carry out. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, in our Puranas—must be brought out from the books and scattered broadcast all over the land. Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. In this land of charity, let us take up the energy of the first charity, the diffusion of spiritual knowledge. And that diffusion should not be confined within the bounds of India. After preaching spiritual knowledge, along with it will come that secular knowledge and every other knowledge that you want; but if you attempt to get the secular knowledge without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India, it will never have a hold on the people.

It is urgent that we hear the call and follow the advice in time.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Edited by Arthur Osborne. Pp. 255. Price Rs. 5.00. [Sri Ramanashram, P.O. Tiruvannamalai, South India.]

This is an excellent symposium of the writings and sayings of Sri Ramana Maharishi, and the author has admirably succeeded in helping to build up an individualistic doctrine if not school in the annals of Indian Philosophy. The Bhagavan was, if one might say so, far removed from the ordinary pattern of 'Jnanis'. He had realised his Self, as a youth of but seventeen summers, having had no prior theoretical instruction or even a Guru. Neither had he a school or disciples of his own; he taught mostly by silence. His gospel of self-enquiry is a happy blending of Jnana, Karma and Bhakti margas. And as Mr Arthur Osborne observes with justice. (P. XV)

'What He did was not so much to restore the old path, as to create a new one adapted to the conditions of our (Kali) age — a path that can be followed in the city or household, no less than in forest and hermitage'.

Though the writings of the Maharishi were not considerable, yet what has come from his pen in prose and verse is by no means meagre. The output which has been most logically arranged includes his famous 'Forty Verses' and his Tamil renderings of Sri Sankara's Vivekachudamani and other minor works, a treatise on 'Agama' cult, verses from the 'Gita', 'Vichara Mani Malai', 'Drik Drisya Viveka' an English verse (P. 166 X) and the well-known 'Pappadam ballads', which seemingly burlesque (97) yet portray the innermost essence of Brahma Vidya.

A few cullings from the rich and variegated material which the author has so skilfully translated and assembled, give us the core of the Maharishi's idealism and idealistic philosophy:

'Firm and disciplined inherence in the Atman is Self Surrender to the Lord. The power of the Lord sustains and controls everything. Knowing that the train carries all the weight, why should the passengers carry their individual articles of luggage on their laps to their great discomfort instead of putting them aside and sitting at perfect ease', (P. 38.)

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'It is pleasant under the shade of the tree and scorching in the heat of the sun outside. (P. 39.)

'The wise man never leaves the shade. In the same way, the mind of the jnani never exists apart from the Brahman'.

'If the Ego rises, all else will rise. The deeper the humility, the better it is for you'. (P. 42.)

'The waters rise up from the sea as clouds, then fall as rain and run back to the sea in streams: nothing can keep them from returning to their source. Likewise the soul rising up from Thee cannot be kept from joining Thee again'. (P. 69.)

'Although he may renounce the whole world it is rare indeed for one to be saved who is subject to vile flattery'. (P. 93.)

'On one's birthday, one should mourn one's entry in Samsara. To glory in it is like decorating a corpse'. (P. 102.)

'He who is contented with his lot, from jealousy is free'. (P. 106.)

'Just as milk is white uniformly though drawn from cows of different colours: so also is Realization uniform for all persons of whatever denomination'. (P. 125.)

'Spiritual advancement does not admit of even the slightest harm to a worm, reptile, insect, tree or life in any form. ....Even flowers should not be plucked'. (P. 135.)

'Jealousy, slander, pomp, passion, envy, love, anger, fear and misery, should all disappear entirely.' (P. 135.)

'Just as husking the paddy exposes the grain within the rice, so also one should separate the pure Atman from the sheaths covering it.' (P. 150.)

'Just as the moon seems to move when the clouds around her move, so also the Self seems to the undiscriminating to be active, when actually the senses are active'. (P. 151.)

'Liberation cannot be obtained through Samkhya, Yoga, ritual or learning, but only through knowledge of the one-ness of Brahman and Atma'. 'A person's sickness is not removed without taking medicine, so too his state of bondage is not removed by scriptural texts as "I am Brahman"'. 'One does not become a king by nearly saying "I am a king".' (P. 169.)

'Just as there can be no sound health so long as the effect of a little poison in the body continues, so there can be no liberation so long as the identification with the ego continues'. (P. 193.)

The glossary appended to the Book has been very carefully prepared and does enable the reader to understand the technique of Indian Philosophical terminology.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

OUTLINES OF VEDANTA: By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar. (Chetana Ltd., 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1.) Pages 163. Price Rs. 4.50.

Vedanta is a subject of much practical value as well as intellectual stimulation. Especially in a country like India which has rivalled any other country of the world in the realm of religion and philosophy, for any person to write on Vedanta with absolute fidelity to the time-honoured Sastras and with only one aim namely of emphasising salient points without confusing the lay mind by too much of hair-splitting subtleties, is perhaps difficult. That the author of this commendably handy volume should have undertaken the task and rendered it in English with adequate grip of the essentials is quite an achievement.

R. Krishnaswami Aiyar has ever impressed himself on his readers by his clarity and understanding of the subject. And more so, when he is confronted with a task of this kind, to avoid technicalities and digressions in order to make the book self-contained. His illustrations, as pointed out by the eminent foreword-writer Sri T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar, are freely drawn from many of his own observations of life and appositely cited to prove beyond doubt the points made in the course of a naturally dry intellectual thesis.

The chapters here are so well arranged that one by one they lead the probing mind to a gradual development of the thought embedded in the Vedanta Sastra. It will not be quite useful to take out any particular topic and illustrate the efficiency and singularly clear method of exposition adhered to by the author. Suffice it to say he has never travelled beyond the limits of relevancy or transgressed the bounds of normal powers of understanding by any abstruse expression or term pertaining to the hide-bound systems of logic and metaphysics enormously drawn upon by our scholars for explanation of points and drawing conclusions based on unchallengeable reasoning.

In eighteen chapters the whole of the outlines of Vedanta is dealt with. Perhaps the entire thesis revolves round the basic propositions: (1) I the one am Brahman; (2) All this is Brahman; and (3) Brahman, the essence of the soul, is identical with Brahman the essence of all. The endeavour throughout by the author is to unravel this concept or concepts with apt analogies and invincible arguments. But the author closes his book exactly with the same thought as in the third chapter of the book namely *Faith*. It is better to signify his meaning in his own words:

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'Mantras are all trash; gestures are all pantomime. Such is the modern attitude. It is no wonder therefore that the Sastric injunctions seem to be losing their efficacy. Even the doctor requires confidence and faith of the patient before he can cure him. The subtlest of diseases is the I-ness in us, and will not the Doctor of Doctors — Isvara — expect us to have faith and confidence in His teachings if we expect Him to cure us of that disease? Let us once get that faith; He will take charge of us, rid us of our faults, lead us step by step even unto His own seat and put us all on the way to still higher glories, higher even than His own.'

Indeed we cannot improve at all upon what we find as the closing words of this high-class book.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN.

CREATIVE EDUCATION: By M. A. Payne. Indian Agents: Chetana Ltd., 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1. Pp. 197. Price Rs. 12.00.

'In 1917 during the first world war we had a ward where the babies, in spite of everything that was done for them, did not thrive — they wailed all the time. One day in desperation I said to the nurse in charge, "Look here nurse, is there anything the matter with *you*? Are you worried about anything? Are you unhappy? Please tell me if you are." She burst into tears. It turned out that her friend in the army had been missing some months and silently she had been nursing her grief. I sent her away for a holiday and took over that nursery myself with the help of a young cheerful nurse but with far less experience than the first. The babies immediately stopped their wailing, they took their food, gained weight and none from that moment looked back.' Thus describes the author her own turning point which focussed her attention on the educational and psychological aspects of life in preference to the physiological. She had later the good fortune of working with pioneers in the field of psychotherapy, Child Psychology etc. The present book contains the results of her experiments in the Education of children of diverse nationalities. She has formulated an intelligent scheme for imparting what she rightly calls *Creative Education* basing her analysis of the shortcomings of the existing systems and her proposals for their reorientation on the researches in 'Scientology' (science of the Mind) by L. Ron Rubbard who has worked in the field of nuclear Physics and Psychology for over three decades.

The first part of the book gives in simple terms the main principles that are to guide any endeavour towards fruitful education. It is the teacher who needs more to be taught than the student. He must cease to be a *teacher*, become a friend and unobtrusively help the child to grow by itself, providing at every step an encouraging smile, a leading question, an approving nod. Each child, like every individual, has a fund of energy; this energy should be properly directed to flow free and increase without getting *trapped* into the involutions of fears, taboos, dos and don'ts and the like. For this purpose the teacher is to be equipped in the science of the right evaluation of the child-potential and the means to manifest it. The author gives a Code for teachers, a Code for the parents and directions generally to bring out the real personality of the child in the process of education.

It is very pleasing to note that one of the main objectives of this kind of education is to make the child gradually conscious of *something* within which is superior to the physical body and which —call it Spirit, call it Energy — can assume full control over the body and the mind thereby drawing a fuller joy of life and expression. (P. 61.)

The second part of the book is devoted to the ways in which such a creative education could be developed on a mass scale, the nature of the simple equipment that could be provided at cheap cost, the games that may be introduced as a regular part of the curriculam etc. Many helpful charts and illustrations are included in the book.

This is a work in the right direction and every library should keep a copy of the book for the benefit of progressive teachers and enlightened parents.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE VOICE OF THE UNINVOLVED: By C. Rajagopalachari. The National Book Trust of India, New Delhi. Pp. 198. Price Rs. 2.50.

As the title aptly suggests, this is a compilation of the speeches and writings on the evils of the Atomic warfare and tests, by one of the foremost politicians of a country which has so far been outside the commissioning of nuclear bombs and tests. One can hardly overstress the need for focussing the world's attention on mankind's most dreaded peril and the value of the present publication could not be vouched better than by Mr Khrushchev's statement in his letter to the author (p. 123) that 'the people will strengthen their pressure on the governments whose policy runs contrary to the interests of peace, and in the long run induce them to listen

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to the voice and demands of the millions, which would once and for all rule out the possibility of an Atomic War catastrophe'.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

THE MESSAGE OF VIVEKANANDA: Published by Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta-13. Pp. 26. Price 25 nP.

This excellently got up brochure is a collection of some energizing sayings of Swami Vivekananda, with a fine picture of Swamiji on the cover.

TAMIL

DAIVAM AND PAURUSHAM: By R. S. N. Ramakrishnan, Ravanasamudram, Tinnevelly District. Pages 35. Price 50 nP.

This booklet in Tamil seeks to reconcile the doctrines of pre-destination and freewill as applicable to the lot of man who has to cope with the legacy of past Karma in his efforts to attain peace and happiness in his wearisome journey through life.

While final liberation from the trammels of Karma is possible only through the dawn of spiritual knowledge, the author argues, with Shastraic authority, that the incidence of pain and suffering can be minimised by expiatory acts like Japa, Puja and Homa performed in a penitent spirit.

The author explains his thesis with illustrative references to stories from the life of Sarmishta, Acharya Sankara and Nandini.

K. PANCHAPAGESAN.

PERIODICAL

BASIC EDUCATION: A quarterly devoted to creative education. Vol. I. No. 1. Edited by Rev. Anthony Elenjimittam, St Catherine of Siena School, Bandra, Bombay-50. Pp. 54. 0.75 cents.

This is a welcome endeavour to instil into the minds of the pupils in India higher values and higher things; and the scheme of basic education which is visualised and indeed has been put into effect in the school whose activities are set out in the publication, is unexceptionable. Copious extracts from Sacred Books, which form as it were, nucleus of a universal religion, add considerably to its value. And there is something in this magazine which one does not meet with in academic journals and for that reason, deserves to be read by young and old, by the teacher as well as by the taught.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

THE VOICE OF AHINSA: The Indo-American cultural number. Published by the Wo[illegible] Jain Mission, Aliganj (Etah), U. P. In[illegible] Volume IX, No. 12, December 1959. Am[illegible] Subscription Rs. 6.

This Special Number of the *Voice of Ahi[illegible]* an international magazine of Ahinsa, is sty[illegible] the Indo-American Cultural Number and co[illegible] tains as such very interesting articles on [illegible] cultures of the two nations by writers of abi[illegible] and scholarship. The article, Walt Whitma[illegible] Revealer of Truth (in the light of Jain Phi[illegible] sophy) by Dr. Kamta Prasad Jain is a maste[illegible] treatment of the writings of the American s[illegible] of truth. The number bears on it the u[illegible] flourish and richness of thought.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

Here are some of the literary magazines p[illegible] lished by the Ramakrishna Mission Educatio[illegible] Institutions. Generally articles in English, S[illegible] skrit and Hindi have been included along w[illegible] those in the main local language, Tamil, Tel[illegible] or Bengali.

ASHRAM — Vol. 13 — 1366: Published [illegible] Ramakrishna Mission Balakashram, Rah[illegible] 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Pp. 116.

MUKUL — Vol. 2—1366: Published by Bar[illegible] nagar Ramakrishna Mission Ashram Eleme[illegible] tary School, Calcutta-36. Pp. 88. Bengali.

SCHOOL MAGAZINE — Vol 2 — 1366: Bar[illegible] nagar Ramakrishna Mission Ashram Hig[illegible] Secondary Multipurpose School, Calcutta[illegible] Pp. 74.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA DEEPAM — Annual 19[illegible] Published by Ramakrishna Mission B[illegible] Schools, Thyagarayanagar, Madras. Pp. 54.

SARASWATI — Vol. IV — 1960: Published [illegible] the Literary Associations of The Sri Ra[illegible] krishna Mission Boys' and Girls' H[illegible] Schools, Chingleput. Pp. 140. Tamil.

TRAYEE — Vol. 3 — 1959: Published by Ra[illegible] krishna Mission Shilpamandira, Enginee[illegible] Section, Belur Math, Howrah. Pp. [illegible] Along with the literary articles some of te[illegible] nical nature also have been included.

VIVEKA — Vol. XIV — 1960: Published by [illegible] Vivekananda College, Madras-4. Pp. 12[illegible]

SANDIPAN — Vol. I — 1960. Sri Ramakri[illegible] Mission Shikshana Mandira. (B. T. Colle[illegible] Belur Math, Howrah. Pp. 64.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

On three successive Sundays (May 1, 8, 15) at 6 p.m. there were public lectures in the Math by distinguished scholars to celebrate the birthdays of Sri Sankara, Ramanuja and Buddha.

Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras, spoke on Sri Sankara. In the course of his talk, he pointed out that Pravritti and Nivritti are the two ways to Liberation. When the true life of action and the true life of renunciation were almost forgotten, Sankara was born to resuscitate the two well-known Vedic ways of life. His philosophy had to clear the ideas about Reality and the way to realize it as against those of degenerate Buddhistic and Mimamsa systems. The professor then spoke about the undisputable existence of the Self and presented very lucidly the tenets of the Advaita philosophy.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., Professor of Philosophy, Karnatak College, Dharwar, spoke on Sri Ramanuja pointing out the urgency of religious values at the present time. Then giving Ramanuja's conception of Ultimate Reality as a triune, a complex unity of cit and acit, held together by Paramatman, he dealt with the Prakara-Prakaribhava: the attribute and Substance relation. The nature of the Soul and its relation to the Lord is one of irrevocable dependence. From the nature of this relation it follows that Self-surrender is the method: If Service of the Lord is the goal, surrender is the means to it. Bhakti is the intense love of God. The one great moral virtue of the method of Bhakti is that it breaks the corrupt core of 'Selfishness' in us, and destroys the ajnana that we are autonomous, individuals that can shape our ends and others' ends. It bursts the conviction into our hearts that there is a transcending, all-loving God at the heart of all Reality. We should lay down our arms and restore back our perverse wills into His will. We are all useless dynamo unless we are charged completely by God. For this process, self-emptying is necessary, before divine filling as are seen in the cases of Draupadi, Gajendra, Prahlada and Dhruva.

Ven'ble E. Nandisvara, B.A. (Lond.), Director, Mahabodhi Society, Madras, spoke on Lord Buddha. He discussed about the conception of three types of Buddha, the periods in which they are born as well as the short life of Gautama Buddha, his sadhana and siddhi. Vaisakha Purnima is called the thrice-blessed day, for on this day Lord Buddha was born, became enlightened and passed away. It is also the day on which he renounced his home-life. Another peculiar thing is that on all the three occasions he was in a garden under the open sky. Lord Buddha is loved and revered throughout the world down the ages because of his love for all beings including the lower creation. It is the Compassionate Buddha whose life and teachings can bring peace and happiness in the world.

TEMPLE OPENING AT CONTAI

The 125th Birthday festival of Sri Ramakrishna and the opening ceremony of the new temple of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated in a gorgeous manner in the premises of the Ramakrishna Math, Contai, Bengal, from 1st to 3rd April, 1960. The preliminary functions consisting of prayers, Bhajan and the 'Sanai' played by Sri Satyendra Nath Hazra and his party being over, at 8-22 a.m. Swami Madhavanandaji, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Parameswarananda-daji and Swami Maheswaranandaji carried respectively the portraits of Sri Sri Thakur, Sri Sri Ma Sarada Devi and Swamiji to the new temple followed by a procession of many Sadhus, Brahmacharis and devotees led from the old shrine. Then the recitations from the Vedas by the Brahmacharis of Belur Math, special rites, yajna to the altar, worshipping of Vastus, Shiva, and recitations of the Chandi were done. At noon about 2,000 devotees took the 'Prasada' with great enthusiasm.

In the evening Swami Japanandaji delivered an eloquent speech on the life and sayings of Sri Ramakrishna in the meeting presided over by Swami Madhavanandaji. The presidential address also was very much appreciated. On the second day too, there was a great festival of hundreds and hundreds of devotees in relation to worship of Sri Sri Chandi, sacrifice by Sanyasins of Belur Math in the altar of 'Saptashati' formed according to the Vedic rites and in the same evening Swami Japanandaji gave an attractive speech on the life and works of the Holy Mother and Swamiji in a largely attended meeting presided over by Swami Madhavanandaji. After the presidential address, there was discussion by Dr Jatindra Bimal Chowdhury and Dr Roma Chowdhury on the life and teachings of the Master and the Mother. In the course of their discussions, songs in Sanskrit and Bengali composed by them were sung by the famous songster, Sri Gouri Kedar Bhattacharjee and were simul-

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taneously tape-recorded by a local devotee, Sri Atul Chandra Shee.

On the 3rd day forenoon, after the Bhajan Swami Maheswaranandaji, Head of the Bankura Ashram, read out the *Ramakrishna Kathamrita* at 8-30 a.m. and then the Hari Samajists of different organisations numbering about forty made Sankirtan. More than eight thousand men and women took prasad. In the evening the 'Nader Nimai Samaj' of Howrah made an excellent performance on the play 'Nader Nimai' which attracted more than ten thousand people. The function thus ended with much enthusiasm and devotion.

RAMAKRISHNA ADVAITA ASHRAMA, KALADY

Sri Sankara Ramakrishna Jayanti: The five day celebration at Kalady Ramakrishna Ashrama was a happy mingling of speeches and discourses, music performances, Harikathas, Dramas and Kalaripayattu. It is no exaggeration to say that the paritcipants included some of the best among the public noted among whom were Swamis Kailasananda and Siddhinathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swamis Dharmananda, Bodhanandasaraswati, Vidyanandateertha-pada representing the different orders in the State and Swami Sri Narayana, the Secretary to the Sri Narayana order of Sanyasis. Among others who participated are Hon. Mr Chandrasekharan, Revenue Minister to the State, K Sankaran, Retired Chief Justice of Kerala, Kalathil Velayudan Nair, Ex-Deputy Chief Minister and Makkappuzha Vasudevan Nair, General Secretary of Nair Service Society. Those who partook in the art performances included Her Highness Sri Manku Thampuran, President, Lalita Kala Academy, and Krishnapuram Raghavan Pillai, the popular Harikatha performer in Malayalam.

The function was inaugurated by Justice Sankaran, to be followed by five different conferences to commemorate Swami Vivekananda, Sri Saradadevi, Sri Sankara, Sri Ramakrishna, and the annual meeting of the Ashram devotees. The programme included Bhajanas, Bhagavata Parayanam and chanting of Siva, Vishnu, Lalita and Ramakrishna Sahasranamas.

The function was well attended. Hundreds of people from different parts of the State were guests of the Ashram for the whole period.

The function terminated with a huge procession taken round the streets of Kalady accompanied by Nadaswaram and Elephant.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, KANPUR

REPORT FOR 1959

The above centre runs a Charitable Hospital, a Higher Secondary School, a Library and Reading Room. Regular preaching work continued as usual during the year. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda were observed with great eclat. The Library contained 5,220 volumes and 3,144 books were issued during the year. The Charitable Hospital treated 1,18,151 patients. 1,277 operations were made in which 49 were major. 1,817 injections were given and the figures for Laboratory tests and Electro-therapy were 92 and 108 respectively. Success in the High School examination had been 83%.

The management thank the supporters and appeal for more funds for the extension of the Hospital and the School.

OBITUARY

Sri Manmathanath Ganguly, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, whose reminiscences of Swamiji was recently published by us, expired at the ripe old age of 86 on the 19th March 195[illegible]. He was suffering from a weak heart and dropsy for the last two months. He was a government pensioner and was known as a Homeopath Doctor among his friends. Before his pension he was the Head Accountant of the Industries. U. P. He was one of the founder members of the Brahmavadin Club, Allahabad. Lifelong he was a devoted member of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Belur. In his early life he came in contact with the Holy Mother, Rakhal Maharaj, Hari Maharaj and others. In his youth he was very active and energetic and became well known for his social service work. He was intimately connected with the inception of Ramakrishna Mission, Kanpur and treated its founder, Brahmachari Nityananda Maharaj, as his own son. For many years, before his marriage, he lived with Swami Vijnananandaji at Allahabad. In his retired life at Phagwara (Punjab) he was lovingly called 'Dada Ji'. Many Sannyasins of the Order used to visit him to exchange the old memories. He was very much respected by all who came in contact with him.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII JULY 1960 No. 3

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna to Vijay: 'The task of a religious teacher is indeed difficult. One cannot teach men without a direct command from God.'

Vijay: 'Don't the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj bring men salvation?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'How is it ever possible for men who have not realized God or received His command, and who are not strengthened with divine strength to liberate others from the bondage of the world? God alone, the Creator of this world-bewitching Maya, can save men from Maya.

'One day, as I was passing the Panchavati on my way to the pinegrove, I heard a bullfrog croaking. After some time, when I was coming back, I could still hear its terrified croaking. I looked to see what the matter was, and found that a watersnake had seized it. The snake could neither swallow it nor give it up. So, there was no end to the frog's suffering. But had it been seized by a cobra, it would have been silenced after three croaks at the most. As it was only a watersnake, both of them had to go through this agony. A man's ego is destroyed after three croaks, as it were, if he gets into the clutches of a real teacher. But if the teacher is an 'unripe' one, then both the teacher and the disciple undergo endless sufferings. The disciple can neither get rid of his ego nor of the shackles of the world.'

When Girish Chandra Ghosh was unable to shake off his fear and anxiety on account of the force of past impressions, Sri Ramakrishna was granting him freedom from fear, with similar words:

'Is it a watersnake that has caught you? You have been caught by a venomous snake — you have to die! Have you not noticed that, caught by cobras and blacksnakes, frogs have not to croak more than three times, then everything is over. If, however, a rare one flees by chance, it dies, even after it has re-entered its hole. Know, the same is the case here.'

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S SPECIALITY

It was no new truths that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa came to preach, though his advent brought old truths to light. In other words, he was the embodiment of all the past religious thought of India.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

Sri Ramakrishna has been recognized by his countrymen as the truest representative of religion in general and of Hinduism in particular. Prof D. S. Sarma, in his *Renaissance of Hinduism*, introduces Sri Ramakrishna with the following words:

> Of all the religious movements that have sprung up in India in recent times, there is none so faithful to our past and so full of possibilities for the future, so rooted in our national consciousness and yet so universal in its outlook, and therefore none so thoroughly representative of the religious spirit of India, as the movement connected with the names of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda. In a way, the true starting point of the present Hindu Renaissance may be said to be Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. For, his life represents the entire orbit of Hinduism, and not simply a segment of it, such as Theism or Vedism. He was a *jnani* as well as a *bhakta*. To him God was both personal and impersonal. He laid equal emphasis on both the householder's life of good works and the sannyasin's life of renunciation and Yoga. Like a true Hindu, he gave free scope to the individual variations in the Kingdom of Spirit. And, again, like a true Hindu, he held that all religions were branches of the same tree. This was not to him a mere intellectual proposition or an inherited doctrine. He demonstrated the truth of it in his own life by going through the *sadhanas* of Islam and Christianity as well as of Hinduism. In fact, Sri Ramakrishna is a unique figure in the history of Hinduism, because, without much education scholarship, he traversed the entire reg of religious experience by his own te and confirmed by his own personal te mony the truths of the Hindu scriptures.
>
> (*Hinduism Through the Ages*, p. 125-12

The universal message of Sri Ram krishna is the message of moderniz Hinduism. How exactly did he do i In modernizing Hinduism had he had make compromises with regard to t fundamentals? What was the uniqu ness of Sri Ramakrishna's approa compared with the views of the oth reform movements of the last century

The Arya Samaj, founded in t Punjab by Swami Dayananda Sara wati, is an influential organizati Swami Dayananda wanted to go b to the pure Vedic religion and in t process rejected the later Hinduism the Puranic age, which he consider as an accretion. So he disowned t deities and the image worship. B doing this, he actually ignored Hin ism as prevalent nowadays — belief the personal God, in devotion to H in His worship in temples etc. It clear then that he rejected much Hinduism which has gone deep into Indian religious consciousness. As result, often it is seen that the A Samaj fights the Sanatani Hindus these scores. It rejects other relig too, and following militant techniq of Christianity and Islam, it tries to them back in their own coin. This course interferes with universal

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which is as much Hindu as it is the modern urgency.

The Brahmo Samaj was started by Raja Rammohan Roy and was reinforced and popularized by Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshab Sen, Shivanath Sastri and others. As social reform became an important item with the Samaj, it gave more importance to giving up of personal God, worship, etc. and also attacked the caste, marriage and other systems. The temple service it introduced was more of the Christian pattern. But because of its total rejection of the prevalent Hindu tradition it alienated itself from the Hindu society, though universalism in one sense was well kept up.

The Theosophical Movement started by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott and popularized by Mrs Annie Besant, pointed out the excellences of Hinduism and made a good appeal to many educated people. While it gave a great fillip to the ancient studies, it could not be accepted as Hinduism, as it evolved its own way of prayers, services, etc. and was too much given to esoterism and occultism.

The Ramakrishna Movement accepted most of the changes advocated by these different societies. But Sri Ramakrishna's uniqueness was this that in accepting the need to reform he did not attack any of the rituals or systems of thought. He just put his finger on the core of the thing. And its value is immense. His realization through the different sectarian methods demonstrated beyond doubt that really there is no cause of quarrel among different sects. He realized God as both personal and impersonal, thereby giving an honoured place to all the existing sects in the religious world. As he vouchsafed the truth in non-Hindu systems through his realization, his message became universal in a deeper sense. It is not merely intellectual or eclectical. For religion to be an enduring force, it is necessary that the realization of a great soul must be at the back of it. It is the unseen spiritual force acquired by the founder of a system that sustains it. That has been the case all through. Sri Ramakrishna, by his realization through different paths supplied the necessary force behind all movements for universalism. In the process he had not to prune the other systems. A votary following his particular sectarian path also will achieve the highest goal if he sincerely follows the disciplines prescribed in his system. As he wholeheartedly accepted all systems, the followers of particular systems too found that they had not to change any of their essentials. Moreover, with such a realization in the background, they could easily be liberalized. This liberalization is done purely through the broadening of the religious outlook and not out of expediency or force of social situation.

Though Sri Ramakrishna represented the whole of religious trends, he stressed on some aspects more repeatedly. These were derived from his experience and hence are fully valid. The essence of religion, he said, is realization of God. It is also the aim of human existence. 'As many views so many paths' was also constantly on his lips. Jnana and Bhakti lead to the same goal. A little of practice is more valuable than a lot of talk. Love of or yearning for God is the measure of the usefulness of all religious practices. Lust and greed must be eschewed to have this love of God. Utmost sincerity must be practised in life.

While Sri Ramakrishna was content in living the ideal life, Swami Vivekananda gave a physical basis to his rea-

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lization by stressing on the uplift of the masses and women, advocating material progress and upholding the necessity of organization. But all these were to be done centering round spirituality. This was a timely message and had tremendous effect on the Indian mind, liberalizing it as well as making it dynamic. As a result, followed the full blooming forth of Hinduism as a philosophy and a way of life, influencing all other social and political movements.

Did Sri Ramakrishna modernize Hinduism through any change in its fundamentals, is a pertinent question that may be asked. Caste system is a point that is sometimes discussed. Now Sri Ramakrishna did not speak very damagingly against caste. In his own life normally he observed caste rules prevalent at the time. But with the onrush of higher spiritual moods these considerations vanished away. He considered devotees of God belonging to a special caste. As he did not support the forcible breaking of caste rules, so he was not in favour also of mere conformity. Swami Vivekananda pointed out the scientific basis of the origin of caste but criticized the later rigidity and thought it must go. Caste according to him is not a fundamental tenet of Hinduism. It is only a social custom, at best with some support from religious books. It might have been an invariable concomitant to the Hindu society, but it is not essential to the Hindu religion. The ancient Acharyas took the social norm for granted and gave it a place in their scheme of religious philosophy. But they too were ready to supersede it whenever there was a conflict with the essentials. This will be clear when we see how caste rules were often overruled by the Shaivite, Shakta and Vaishnavite teachers. So Swamiji thought that Hindu society along with caste must change, but not the Hindu religion. This will clarify the doubt whether Sri Ramakrishna's Movement had to change the fundamentals of the Hindu religion.

Some of the views of Sri Ramakrishna activised the Hindu religious consciousness and brought about changes in the outlook and social customs. These views were already there in the old systems. The credit is more in the timely stress on a particular idea. The idea of serving of humanity as manifestations of God, or Karmayoga as propounded by Swami Vivekananda may be taken as a point. Acharya Sankara clearly gave this idea in his famous saying giving the gist of the Advaita philosophy: 'Brahman is real and eternal, world is unreal and relative, the individual is nothing but Brahman.' For all these centuries, the stress among religious philosophers was more on the unreality of the world. Swamiji pointed out that individuals are nothing but Brahman and so the implication is, we must serve Brahman through the service of humanity, at least as long as we are in the dual throng.

It is often said that for proper material progress of society, life-affirmation is essential. Sri Ramakrishna's realization of the One existence in the whole universe and Swami Vivekananda's propagation of it and his intense sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden have given the required affirmation. But in doing this no compromise had to be made regarding the age-old ideas preached by earlier saints and sages. It is only an application of the idea propounded in the scriptures. But what a great difference it made! From indifference or casual service, it made the ancient society dynamic. Not only the generality of people, but even the

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monks who lead a sort of an extreme life, took service to man with the idea of divine service, as a way of spiritual sadhana. This activizing of the ancient Order of monks has brought back the ancient prestige of religious hermits, which they were losing with the onrush of materialistic and utilitarian ideas.

As for social reforms, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji did not give so much stress. Their emphasis was on true religion. It showed how true religious life can be a liberating force doing away with bigotry and selfishness and also social evils, the effects of these dark forces. So they did not attack the evils of society directly, but wanted to purify the individual and social life by creating a genuine urge for spirituality.

This type of special emphasis is given in different ages by great souls. This is precisely the function of the Avatara, an Incarnation of God, who promulgates a system with added stress on a particular aspect of God, reality or sadhana, according to the necessity of the age. Often it is done to correct the previous stress current for several centuries. It is not that the old view is thrown overboard but by shifting the stress the old one is purified and balanced. Often it took the form of a challenge. Hence the Vedic Karmakanda dealing with rituals was challenged by the Upanishadic Jnanakanda. The Buddhistic Shunya was corrected by the Sankarite Brahman. The Sankarite stress on knowledge was balanced by devotional schools' stress on Bhakti.

While giving the special emphasis, the important thing Sri Ramakrishna's teaching did, was to sift the essentials from the non-essentials. Religion is a way of life; it is not pure philosophy. Hence many other things also get mixed up. So the greatest service of his message is to win over the Indian mind from mere rituals or scriptural scholarship to realization and the yearning for God. That is the yardstick with which he measured the value of beliefs, rites and views. Of course, he did not ignore the value of any of these, but put them in their proper place in the scheme of one's endeavour for spiritual life. This essential of religion is known as Vedanta. It is also the essential core of all other religions and hence is universal.

While sifting the essentials and putting the emphasis on realization, Sri Ramakrishna purified the prevalent rituals too. That he did by the age-old method of reinterpretation which gives a higher meaning to the mixed-up practices and endows them with higher potentiality and better content.

The impact of Sri Ramakrishna's message was to energise Indians and to free the different sects from bigotry. By pointing out through his realization that all paths lead to the same goal and that our worship to any deity goes really to the same God, he could imperceptibly liberalize the different sects and create a sort of loving acceptance of all of them. This is a tremendous task which was done very smoothly.

Hence Sri Ramakrishna quite justifiably, has been accepted as the truest representative of Hinduism. Though his views are nothing new; the uniqueness lies in the stress, in sifting the essentials, in reinterpretation, in liberalizing, in universal acceptance, in wide sympathy, and most important of all, in providing a contemporary proof that God-realization is possible through every path, and that it is the highest goal of human life.

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SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

(Continued from the last issue)

Jamnagar (or Navanagar)

Here in this memoir of my travels in Kathiawad it would not be out of place to record my experience in 1893 regarding Vedic learning in India and my attempt to re-introduce it. The *Sevavrata* (vow of service) had its inception at Jamnagar; it had its evolution at Khetri in Rajputana and development and maturity in Murshidabad.

The first time I came to Jamnagar I stayed three or four months at the house named Dhanwantari Bhavan as a guest of Manisankar Viththalji, the Ayurvedic physician. The Viththaljis are Nagar Brahmins, physician by profession.

At Jamnagar there were three Agnihotri householders (offering ghee in the sacred fire every day). Bababhai Vaidya was the most famous. He was a Nagar Brahmin, an erudite scholar and the State physician in the court of Udaipur. His Chaturmasya * sacrifice was performed with great pomp here at Dhanwantari Dham. Many noble men of Kathiawad and Udaipur came by invitation. Of them I had acquaintance with Surathsinghji, brother of Maharana Fatesinghji of Udaipur, and the grandson of Udaishankar, Diwan of Bhavnagar.

For long I had a mind to study *Charak-Sushruta-Samhita* (books on Ayurvedic medicine). On arrival at Dhanwantari Dham I started studying *Sushruta Samhita*. As the commentary on *Charak-Sushruta-Samhita* compiled by Jivananda Vidyasagar of Calcutta was not to be had there, I had to have recourse to the voluminous dictionary, *Sabdarthachandrika*, published by the Prince of Udaipur, Maharana of Mewar.

Attempt at re-introduction of Vedic education

Attached to Dhanwantari Dham there was a Vedic Chatushpathi (school). Poor Brahmin boys of Kathiawad villages begged from door to door and eating one meal a day, cooked by themselves, read there the four Vedas, Rik, Sama, Yajur and Atharva.

The Vedic teachers were conversant with the mode of chanting the Vedas (Hastapātha and Swarapātha) alone, they could not interpret a single word. But the teacher of Shuklayajurveda with his pupils chanted in his leonine voice the Vedic Mantras with proper stress on the vowels (Udatta, Anudatta and Swarita), their arms waving to keep time. Words cannot express my joy, such as I had never felt before. I sat before every Vedic teacher and heard his chanting. But, unfortunately, the teachers were all ignorant of the six Vedangas (auxiliaries to the Vedas).

Seeing the privations of the poor Brahmin boys of different places assembled there, I opened an Annasatra (a place where food is distributed free) through the munificence of Babu Pramadadas Mitra, a rich gentleman of Kashi. From this Satra the poor pupils would get every day their requisite quantity of wheaten flour, pulse, ghee, etc. In the vacation the students left the place and the Annasatra was closed.

I too became a pupil of Shuklayajurveda (Madhyandina Branch) and learnt its chant-

* The Sanyasi Paramahamsas do not move about for four months from Dasahara (tenth day of the bright fortnight in July) to Kartik Purnima (full moon in November). Observance of this period is called Chaturmasya.

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ing. The lack of a Vedic teacher, able to interpret the Vedas, even in such a Vedic Chatushpathi, filled my heart with extreme grief. I then had the idea that a scholar versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas must be available at the holy city of Kashi. I must try to find one.

A Dravida Brahmin versed in the Vedas

Here at Dhanwantari Dham, a Dravida Brahmin of Madura, versed in the Vedas, was observing his vow of Chaturmasya. Every day before day-break (Brahma Muhurta), he would get up and have his bath. He then made hundreds of earthen Lingams of Siva and made a square block of them. At the centre he placed a large Lingam with the Gauripatta made of the small Lingams. At 2 p.m. he finished his worship and then took his meal, cooked by himself, and then talked with me on the scriptures.

He was a Brahmin who had read the Taittiriya branch of Krishna-Yajurveda and he could interpret the same to a certain extent. It was a custom with me then to chant the *Chandi* on occasions. On hearing my chanting of the Chandi he said, 'The Bengalees have a reputation for chanting the Chandi, as we have for chanting the Vedas. I have been charmed to hear your reading of the Chandi'.

Then he added that in his boyhood his relatives and Dravida Brahmana scholars went to Bengal by invitation. Their scriptural discussions could not be concluded even in a month. As they took leave they were presented with a huge quantity of provisions and other things with which they returned home. They earned a great deal in this way. The provisions they got as present would have maintained their family for a long while.

Once when he was thus loud in praise of Bengal I said to him, 'Maharaj, do you not know that the Bengalees eat too much fish? Bengalee gentlemen would sit on the bank of a tank the whole day long to catch fish by baiting them, would you like this?'

At this he recited a Mantra of the Krishna-Yajurvediya Taittiriya Samhita (2. 6. 6.). I do not remember the whole of it, it begins thus:

अग्नेस्त्रयो ज्यायांसो भ्रातर आसन्, ते देवेभ्यो हव्यं वहन्तः प्रामीयन्त.....

(The god of fire had three brothers who carried the sacrificial ghee to the gods). It ends in घिया घिया त्वा वध्यासुः

'(Be thou for slaughter)'.

Here is the story. The fire-god Agni has another name Havyavahana (carrier of sacrificial ghee). The charge of taking ghee to the gods devolved on him. His three brothers had died of sheer fatigue in carrying ghee. Out of fear, Agni hid himself in a lake. He thought, 'When my three brothers have had this fate, how long would I be able to carry the ghee? Before long I shall meet with the same fate.' The gods were reduced to starvation for a good many days. They met together and traversed this mortal world below in search of Agni. As they came to the lake where Agni, out of fear of the gods, was hiding, some fishes raised their faces out of the water and told them of the whereabouts of Agni. As the fishes of their own accord had helped in the arrest of Agni, his anger 'blazed up' and he cursed them thus: 'As you of your own accord helped in my arrest, you will be objects for slaughter in many ways in the world; people will seek you out and exercise their ingenuity in killing you.'

The Pandit added, 'The Bengalees do but act upto the injunctions of the Vedas'. I was taken by surprise to hear from him that the action of the fish-eating Bengalees had the support of the Vedas.

At Jamnagar there are many Jain temples. The ways of the Vedic Hindus are also influenced by the Jains. Nobody dared do anything in public against the Jains. In their ways of life the Jains and the Vaishnavas laid down the law for others.

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At Dhanwantari Dham Bhai Manisankar Viththalji one day asked that Brahmin, 'What has one to do to expiate sin?' In reply he advised him to perform 'Aswin Pashu Yaga' or sacrifice of two goats in honour of the two gods Aswini-Kumaras. At this Manisankarji was much annoyed with the Brahmin Vedic scholar.

Brahmachariji

While at Dhanwantari Dham I would often go in the afternoon to the temple of a Brahmachari (a celibate recluse). While I was at Jamnagar the Prince of the place was Jam Vibha. His race is that of 'Jadaiya' or 'Jadeya' Rajputs, that is, the clan of the Yadus. Jam Vibha loved this Brahmachari very much. From the State he was given much land free of rent. The massive doors and door-frames of the Vishnu temple were of solid silver and there were gold and silver vessels. There was a cart drawn by a pair of stout bullocks and a tom-tom (a light carriage drawn by one horse). Abundant crops were gathered from the lands belonging to the temple for use therein.

The Brahmachari was an elderly man. He was a follower of a Sanyasi Paramahamsa. As he had no follower he often proposed that by a deed of transfer he would make me the owner of all the property of the temple and his successor. But I would say, '*Jal to chalta bhala, Sadhu to Ramta bhala* (It is good for water to flow on and for a Sanyasi to wander about). I am a travelling Sanyasi (Parivrajaka), surely I cannot take charge of a temple.'

When Jam Vibha was out walking past the temple, he would utter aloud 'Bom Bom' and the Brahmachari, standing behind a window, would respond saying 'Bom Bom'. Jam Saheb loved him much.

Jam Saheb Vibha

Jam Vibha did not care in the least for convention. He lived in a large house outside the city instead of in the palace. Every morning he came to the palace in the city and met his queens. Often he came in the afternoon too. His bodyguards would follow him on horse-back.

He adopted a boy, as he was childless. But as one of his Muslim queens gave birth to a boy, litigation started after some years. Ranjit Singhji the adopted son, afterwards gained the support of some princes of Cutch and Kathiawad, all belonging to the Yadu clan, and went to England to lodge a complaint with the British Government against Jam Vibha. It was then that Ranjit Singhji gained an undying fame as a cricketeer. He is known to the whole world as a cricketeer of supreme merit.

Tokra Swami

Some years before I went to Jamnagar, a saintly Paramahamsa of the south had been there. I saw a likeness of his. The Jam Saheb was attached to him.

In spite of being an Advaitin, well versed in the scriptures, the Swamiji did formal worship till three in the afternoon. A learned man once asked him, 'Well, Swamiji, being a Monist Paramahamsa why should you do ceremonial external worship every day?" The Swamiji in reply recited a verse which I give here.

विश्वेश्वरे च सुधिया गलितेऽपि भेदे
भावेन भक्तिसहितेन समर्चनार्हः ।
प्राणेश्वरे तु चतुर्या मिलितेऽपि चित्ते
वस्त्रांचलै र्व्यवहितोऽपि निरीक्षणीयः ॥

Its import is: With the learned man the difference between Paramatman and Jivatman has vanished, but still Paramatman is fit for worship, as the husband and wife are closely united (in their hearts) but still the wife looks yearningly at her spouse from behind her veil.

(To be continued)

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SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

T. R. RAGHAVA SASTRI

The lilas of God have an infinite variety and grandeur. Especially when he takes a human form, they have a fascination and charm not equalled, much less surpassed, by any phenomenon found in the fields of human endeavour. This land of ours is verily a Punya Bhumi, for it is here that again and again God has incarnated himself in order to preserve our Sanatana Dharma. The need and purpose of an avatar are given in the *Bhagavata* :

यदा यदेह धर्मस्य क्षयो वृद्धिश्च पाप्मनः ।
तदा तु भगवानीश आत्मानं सृजते हरिः ॥
न ह्यस्य जन्मनो हेतुः कर्मणो वा महीपते ।
आत्ममायां विनेशस्य परस्य द्रष्टुरात्मनः ॥

Whenever there is decline of virtue and growth of sin in this world the Almighty Lord Hari manifests Himself at that time.

Oh King, excepting His own sankalpa for sport, nothing else is the cause for the avatar and actions of the Lord—the Supreme and the disinterested observer. (9.24.56-7)

The avatar of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna has ushered in a new era in the religious history of our land. In the first half of the last century, owing to the impact of Western Civilization with its imposing paraphernalia of Science and Technology and the insidious propaganda of foreign missionaries, people of our land began to doubt and question the validity of our spiritual traditions and practices. Though many religious movements were inaugurated, they were found powerless to stem the rising tide of Western Materialism. It was at this juncture that Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna appeared. His spiritual experiences acquired by undergoing the various religious austerities as laid down by our ancient scriptures, proved beyond a shadow of doubt that all the paths prescribed in our scriptures as well as in other religions lead to the same goal, namely, God-realization. This affirmation of Unity of all religions and especially the re-affirmation of faith in our religion were the crying need of the times.

The duty of carrying this message of unity of all religions and the greatness of our ancient culture and its catholicity was entrusted by the Master to his esoteric disciples.

We are told that when God incarnates on this earth, he comes down with some of his pārshadas or apostles or as Sri Ramakrishna used to call them Iswara-Kotis, who assume human forms and carry out the Lord's behests.

कृष्णवर्णं त्विषाकृष्णं साङ्गोपाङ्गास्त्रपार्षदम् । —
यज्ञैः सङ्कीर्तनप्रायैर्यजन्ति हि सुमेधसः ॥

By yajnas of holy chantings wise men worship the Lord who is white in complexion, *accompanied by all divine limbs and retinue* and who bears the name 'Krishna'. (11.5.32)

It is well known how Swami Vivekananda, the leader of them all, carried the message of the Master to the four corners of the world and made India wake up from her agelong slumber.

To Sri Ramakrishnananda was given the privilege of nurturing the seed sown by Swamiji.

The life-story of Sri Sasi Maharaj is a romance in the realm of the Spirit.

Sri Sasi Bhushan Chakravarti, as he was called in his pre-monastic days, was a lad of 20 when he met for the first time Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He was then in the F.A. Class, a brilliant student with a taste for Sanskrit, English, Mathematics and Philosophy. As was the case with many youths of his age, the quest for a higher life led him to join the Brahmo Samaj founded by the gifted leader Keshab Chandra Sen. But his

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spiritual hunger could not be satisfied by an eclectic creed. So when some of his brother-members of the Samaj told him of a paramahamsa living at Dakshineswar, he made up his mind to visit him. By divine planning Sasi met Sri Ramakrishna on a day in October 1883. Let us hear of this meeting in Sasi Maharaj's own words. 'I had a desire to see the Paramahamsa at Dakshineswar, because Keshab Chandra Sen had spoken of him in such high terms. So one day I went with fifteen or twenty other boys. I was then reading for the First Arts (examination) and the others were preparing for the Matriculation. Being the eldest of the band, the conversation was addressed to me. I talked a great deal on that day; but never again'. From the moment of this meeting to his last day, the life of Sasi Maharaj was one of complete surrender and dedication to his Master and Lord.

For about two happy years Sasi Maharaj continued his visits to Dakshineswar and sat at his holy feet and listened with rapt attention to the Upanishadic truths couched in simple language that fell from his lips. But when the Master fell ill in the latter part of 1885 Sasi left his home and his studies. He served and nursed the Master like a loving and devoted mother.

To quote from the book on life of Sri Ramakrishna, 'Great as was the devotion of every one of the attendants to Sri Ramakrishna, that of Sasi was by far the most conspicuous. It was unparalleled. Sasi was the very embodiment of service. He was fully convinced that service to the Guru was the highest form of religion. He practised no other spiritual discipline. He knew no other asceticism. Regardless of personal comfort, of food or rest, he was indefatigably at work. His one idea was to alleviate the sufferings of the Master. He would have given up his life if he had thought that would cure him. He had attained perfection through service. So of what use were other forms of discipline to him? Every one marvelled at his indefatigable energy, his sustained power of endurance and his boundless love for the Master'.

His brother-disciples, after the passing away of the Master in 1886, went on pilgrimages as parivrajakas or took to a life of intense meditation and tapas. But for Sasi Maharaj the worship of the Master was his only sadhana. In Baranagore Monastery he worshipped the relics of the Master; and at Madras, he worshipped the portrait of his Master.

What others achieved by other modes of tapas, Sasi Maharaj achieved by his intense worship and service of his Guru. He was the personification of Guru-bhakti of a type rare in Kaliyuga. We have read of Anjaneya's bhakti to Sri Ramachandra; and perhaps some of us may think that this happened in a bygone age if it was not altogether the creation of a poet's imagination. But those who have read the accounts given by eye-witnesses in Madras of the intense and ecstatic devotion of Sasi Maharaj when conducting the worship of his Guru will be, I am sure, reminded of that bhakti which made Lanka reverberate with the cry of *Dasoham*.

The role of a Guru in a Sadhaka's life has been depicted in our scriptures. A Guru to be worthy of the name must have the rare qualification :

शाब्दे परे च निष्णातं ब्रह्मण्युपशमाश्रयम् ।

Therefore, one who desires to know the Supreme good should resort to a teacher who is well versed in the Vedas and who finds his solace in the Supreme Brahman. (11.3.21.)

And a Guru is indispensable.

विजितहृषीकवायुभिरदान्तमनस्तुरगं
य इह यतन्ति यन्तुमतिलोलमुपायखिदः ।
व्यसनशतान्विताः समवहाय गुरोश्चरणं
वणिज इवाज सन्त्यकृतकर्णधरा जलधौ ॥

My Lord, those who, without resorting to the feet of Guru, try to control the most fickle mind-horse, perish, even as merchants do without helmsmen, and remain surrounded by countless miseries, though they have conquered the senses and vital airs. (10.87.33.)

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If one is fortunate in getting a Guru, the Sadhana is given by him.

भयं द्वितीयाभिनिवेशतः स्यादीशा-
दपेतस्य विपर्ययोऽस्मृतिः ।
तन्माययातो बुध आभजेत्तं
भक्त्यैकयेशं गुरुदेवतात्मा ॥

नन्वर्थकोविदा ब्रह्मन् वर्णाश्रमवतामिह ।
ये मया गुरुणा वाचा तरन्त्यञ्जो भवार्णवम् ॥
नाहमिज्या प्रजातिभ्यां तपसोपशमेन वा ।
तुष्येयं सर्वभूतात्मा गुरुशुश्रूषया यथा ॥

Fear comes in, owing to His maya, for one who thinks that there is another reality: ignorance and forgetfulness will result when one moves away from the Lord. Therefore, one should resort to the Lord with undivided devotion, considering the teacher as his deity and the most beloved. (11.2.37.)

Friend, indeed those are wise and conversant with human ends among men of different castes and asramas who cross quickly the great ocean with the help of the instructions of a teacher who is verily (Myself) the Lord.

I, the innermost soul of all beings, am not so much pleased with yajna, high birth, penance, or self-control—as I am with one's devotion for his guru. (10.80.33-34.)

Swami Ramakrishnananda was blessed in that he had an avatar as his Guru and he realised early in his life that his Guru was none but God. In proof of this statement let me quote from an article titled *Ramakrishna Tattvābhāsa* contributed by Sasi Maharaj to the *Udbodhan*: 'In the modern age,' the Swami observes in that article, 'in order to be recognised as a learned man one has to take recourse to books. The more books one peruses the more learned he is called. It is not too much to say that Sri Ramakrishna had no book-learning. He used to call a Grantha (book) a granthi (a knot or bondage) for in most cases book-learning gives rise to egoism, and thereby drags the mind into the pit of worldliness. He earnestly advised one of his disciples not to attach more importance to book-reading than to guru-seva and spiritual practice. The Upanishads teach that learning is of two kinds, superior and inferior. Inferior learning of which Sri Ramakrishna had almost nothing is gained through reading books. Even the knowledge of the Vedas and the scriptures belongs to this category. But the superior learning of which Sri Ramakrishna was a master leads one to the realization of God. Taking shelter at the feet of the Master we understood what superior learning (paravidya) is. By sheer powers of this vidya he could remove the veil of ignorance from the minds of the educated and the illiterate. Such a phenomenon is nowhere seen or heard. This proves beyond doubt that Sri Ramakrishna was God-Incarnate.' To illustrate his Master's Godhood the Swami continues: 'He had no egoism at all. He could seldom utter the two words, "I" and "My". In those cases where people use these two pronouns he would place his palm on his breast and say "Here". As his own ego was totally obliterated, the cosmic "I" of God took hold of him and manifested itself through him. The Divine Mother Kali is incarnated in Sri Ramakrishna to grant Jnana and Bhakti to men and women of this age'.

In fact, when one reads the accounts given in Sasi Maharaj's biography, one is led to conclude that to him the Master was a living presence and that he was in constant communion with him as were the Gopis of Brindavan.

या दोहनेऽवहनने मथनोपलेप-
प्रेङ्खेङ्खनार्भरुदितोक्षणमार्जनादौ ।
गायन्ति चैनमनुरक्तधियोऽश्रुकण्ठ्यो
धन्याव्रजस्त्रिय उरुक्रमचित्तयानाः ॥

Blessed are the cowherd women who with their mind filled with love for Krishna and eyes with tears of joy, think constantly of Him and sing His glory even when they milk the cows, carry the water, churn the curd, smear the ground, rock the cradle, lull the baby, sprinkle water and sweep the house. (10.44.15.)

In my opinion all other actions and activities of his, flow from this realization. His love for his fellow-disciples, his devotion and implicit obedience to Swami Vivekananda and

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Swami Brahmananda, his intense and abiding reverence to the Holy Mother were all the result of his conviction that they were the Master incarnated in his disciples. So when Swami Vivekananda wanted him to go to Madras, he took it as a command from his Master and relinquishing the worship of the Sacred relics of his Master, he came here to serve the people of Madras in 1897, eleven years after the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna.

The difficulties and privations he underwent in Madras in those days in order to spread the message of the Master, have been chronicled in his biography in some detail. To mention a few: 'In the early period of his work in Madras the Swami had to do puja, cooking and all the household work himself. His classes were scattered in distant parts of the city and to many of them he used to go on foot taking a long time. On certain days of the week he had two or three classes and so he would return to the Math too tired to cook his food even. On such a night his meal was very simple and consisted probably of a little bread. But none except himself was aware of his difficulties. Only a few of his students who frequented the Math and who were closely associated with him knew of them and volunteered to remove them. He would not easily accept even the proffered help. He would not allow his students who had only moderate incomes to undergo any sacrifice for his sake.'

Questioned as to how he maintained the monastery, he replied with a striking composure, 'God sends me whenever I want anything'. This he said from his own practical experience, of which the following incident is an illustration. One day there was not a drop of ghee to fry the chapati. He was calmly pacing up and down the verandah not knowing where the help would come from. Just then, quite unexpectedly a student of his approached him gently and conveyed his intention to contribute his mite to the Math and implored him to tell him in what form the help should be. The Swami characteristically demurred at first, but on the insistence of the student said, 'Let me have one viss of ghee'. This contribution in kind he received every month from the student ever afterwards regularly. When his friends and followers at Madras came at last to know of the stuff he was made of, they came forward to look after the finances of the Math.

How Swami Ramakrishnananda worked hard and underwent endless difficulties to establish the monastery at Madras is revealed by an eye witness as follows. 'The Swami had to face infinite odds in going to the classes. In the time of his sojourn in these parts there were no buses and tram cars. There was a peculiar kind of jutka, not of the type we have now. It was a sort of small box into which three had to squeeze themselves; one would sit at the entrance and the other two opposite to him just at the back of the driver's seat. The entrance into the jutka was very narrow and the box was fitted in a slanting way so that the passengers had always to learn the lesson of alertness not to slip and knock against another. It was a funny sight to see Swami Ramakrishnananda entering the jutka with his stout and robust body squeezing himself and bending his head. These jutkas were not available near the Ice House and often the Swami had to walk up to a jutka stand, a mile off in the Triplicane bazaar, nor had he always the requisite money to hire one. He had then to go all the way to Chintadripet which could be reached only through the Mount Road. But Mount Road was then a low-lying place and was often under water and the Swami had to wade knee-deep and sometimes hip-deep in water to go to the classes. Through the grace of his Guru on whom he fully depended, a Harijan jutka-walla came forward to take the Swami and ever since used to appear at the appointed time to take the Swami to the class and bring him back to the Math.'

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Verily has the Lord said in the Gita,

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमम् वहाम्यहम् ॥

Persons who, meditating on Me as non-separate, worship Me in all beings, to them thus ever zealously engaged, I carry what they lack and preserve what they already have. (9.22.)

In short the fourteen years of his life in Madras was a period of ceaseless and untiring work. He visited many places not only in Madras Presidency but also in Burma, Ceylon and Trivandrum. Wherever he went, people flocked to hear him. Monasteries and Ramakrishna Mission centres came into existence one after another owing to the powerful spiritual climate he brought with him wherever he went. If, today, we find various centres of the Ramakrishna Mission humming with religious activities, and several educational institutions and poor homes and hospitals under the guidance of monks of the Ramakrishna Order rendering help to thousands of men and women in this and in other lands, it is because of the selfless and blessed labours of Sasi Maharaj. Literally he wore himself out in the service of his master and Lord. He had at length the crowning satisfaction of arranging the tours of Swami Brahmananda and Holy Mother through the South and he ministered to their comfort and convenience during those tours.

Shortly afterwards, in August 1911, he cast off his earthly body and reached the lotus feet of his beloved Master.

In the short span of 48 years he has compressed the work of centuries. We see today the edifice of the Ramakrishna Mission the foundations for which were laid by Swami Ramakrishnananda. The tree he has planted, has just now taken deep roots. The flowers and fruits, of which we enjoy a few, are yet to come in greater abundance in the shape of beneficent activities of this great mission which enshrines the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna.

To Sri Sasi Maharaj service to fellowmen was worship of the Lord. Whether his visitor was a Muslim or Hindu or Christian his love welled up equally to all. He had reverence to all saints. He revered Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa. Did not his Master realise in his life that Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and Adwaita are *sopānams*, merely stages in the awareness of the ultimate reality?

Qualities which are apparently irreconcilable find a happy synthesis in him. His reverence for Bhagavan Sankara knew no bounds. Yet he has written a classical biography of Sri Ramanuja. He was a rare combination of orthodoxy and tolerance. He observed scrupulously all Hindu religious customs; for like his Master, the Swami held that these religious observances were like the chaff covering the grain, very essential to preserve the vitality of religion. Yet he would kneel down before the Altar in a Church like a true Christian. Though he was a stern disciplinarian he was also full of sweet forgiveness. Though he was surrounded by men, he was all alone. His decisive reply to a devotee's reference to this was, 'I am full of God, what need have I of any one else?'

Luckily for us, some of the lectures and talks he gave during his lifetime, have been published in book form. His inner experience and spirituality are reflected in every page. 'Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission', 'Sri Krishna the Pastoral and King-maker', 'The Message of Eternal Wisdom' and 'God and Divine Incarnations', are some of his books, which deserve our close study.

His sayings marked by profundity and terseness, show a rare combination of crystallized spiritual experience and thought, which make us feel that God is speaking through him. 'The man who depends on himself is never safe, while the man who has perfect faith in God is never in danger', is a saying of his, which should be inscribed in our hearts.

Again, 'Salvation should be the motto of every man; for sleeping, eating and propagating, we have in common with the lower

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animals'. We find this idea brought out in the lines :

लब्ध्वा सुदुर्लभमिदं बहुसम्भवान्ते
मानुष्यमर्थदमनित्यमपीह धीरः ।
तूर्णं यतेत न पतेदनुमृत्यु याव-
न्निःश्रेयसाय विषयः खलु सर्वतः स्यात् ॥

Before death overtakes, the wise who has secured this purposeful but perishable and rare human body after several births — the body — a source of all happiness, should try hard for getting the eternal bliss—lest the worldly things around should attract him. (11.9.29.)

The three main mārgas or paths given in Hindu scriptures for realisation of God, do not run on parallel lines. They have many points of intersection. But at higher levels of spiritual ascent, they merge indistinguishably into one. That is why when we contemplate Swami Ramakrishnananda's life, we find him a Jnani, a Bhakta and a Karma Yogi. Yet Swami Ramakrishnananda was never tired of advising the young aspirants that self-surrender to the Lord, or bhakti mārga, is the one, best suited to this age and the easiest to follow.

यत् कर्मभिर्यत्तपसा ज्ञानवैराग्यतश्च यत् ।
योगेन दानधर्मेण श्रेयोभिरितरैरपि ॥
सर्वं मद्भक्तियोगेन मद्भक्तो लभतेऽञ्जसा ।
स्वर्गापवर्गं मद्धाम कथंचिद् यदि वाञ्छति ॥

My devotee gets easily all that he desires, heavenly bliss, kaivalya and My own abode, by his devotion—things obtained by others by other means viz., sacrifices, knowledge, renunciation, yoga, charity and other virtuous deeds.

(11.20.32-33.)

Sasi Maharaj comes in the line of the great saints and seers who have adorned this land. Though he belongs to this ancient order, his teaching is of particular value for the modern age which is characterised by agnostic and atheistic thought. Like a kindly light he leads us through the darkness of doubt and materialism into the land of faith and godliness. May we ever remember him and prostrate before him.

THE PATH OF DATTATREYA

K. R. R. SASTRY

One of the mighty intellects and spiritual giants of the nineteenth century, T. Subba Rao, wrote stressing on the widely held faith that Lord Dattatreya gave darsan to the genuinely believing on the day of *Dattatreya Jayanti* falling on the fourteenth bright lunar day in Karthigai (Nov.-Dec.) near a tamarind tree in Mysore.

Dattatreya in tradition.

Widely believed to be the gift of Mahesvara to Sage Atri, his name confirms it. Later puranic tradition weaves the story of the test of chastity of devoted Anasuya who in turn transforms Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra as three 'babies' to whom food is served by the wife of Atri in her primal form. The penance of Atri and the chastity of Anasuya thus got the incarnation of the three Gods in Dattatreya.

A figure that has long lived in our memory is the hefty three-headed God, Dattatreya, leading the four Vedas in the form of four dogs.

Living presence.

The best and exhaustive tribute to Dattatreya is the great work on *Dattatreya* by Sri Jaya Chamarajendra Wadiyar, the cultured head of the Mysore State. He is to him 'not merely a symbol but a great living and ever auspicious presence' — to his parents a devoted son, an exemplary ascetic and a great teacher of *Sakta* and *Saiva* doctrines. Dattatreya is the preceptor of Parasurama and Samkrti.

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He is a *Jivanmukta*, liberated though living. He is always the philosopher completely detached from the worldly things, the embodiment of renunciation, true wisdom, universal kindness and enormous spiritual and miraculous powers.

Author of the Jivanmukta Gita.

Jivanmukti (liberation while living) is an important concept in Vedic thought. In the Mundaka Upanishad, Varaha Upanishad, Mahopanishad, Annapurna Upanishad and Atmopanishad are to be found definitions and elaborate discussions of *Jivanmukti*.

Perhaps the best thesis is by Sri Vidyaranya in the *Jivanmukti-Viveka*: Profound chapters therein deal with *vasana-kshaya* (obliteration of latent desire) and *manonasa* (dissolution of the mind).

The results of the discipline are thus expounded by Dattatreya:

चिन्मयं व्याप्तं सर्वं आकाशं जगदीश्वरं ।
सहितं सर्वभूतानां जीवन्मुक्तः स उच्यते ॥

'The person who understands and actually sees the Supreme Lord of all the world as being spirit itself which pervades all space and therefore as being given along with all creatures, the centres of activity, is one who is said to be liberated in life.'

Author of the Avadhuta Gita.

Dattatreya, the *guru* of all ascetics is also the author of the *Avadhuta-Gita* consisting of eight chapters and comprising 289 verses. Its style is Vedic and to understand it presupposes a careful study of the *Darsana* literature.

The first verse is profound:

ईश्वरानुग्रहादेव पुंसां अद्वैतवासना ।
महद्भयपरित्राणात् विप्राणां उपजायते ॥

'By God's grace alone, will there arise in men who are inwardly stirred the fragrance of non-duality which will save them from great fear.'

Grace essential.

Works of Dattatreya state that *Grace of the Lord alone* can give us this knowledge of undifferentiated unity. Lives of all mystics, Oriental and Occidental are replete with this devout prayer for Divine Grace.

Truth of equipoise.

A philosophy that is *not personal* lacks sincerity. The preacher of religion is fit for the role only after *Divine darsan*. That is what Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa has taught us through the laboratory of his life.

Dattatreya is in short the *Truth of Equipoise*. 'Multiplicity is an appearance and unity is reality.'

Let us *meditate* on this verse to Dattatreya presented by the Sandilya Upanishad (3. 1. 4):

दत्तात्रेयं शिवं शान्तं इन्द्रनीलनिभं प्रभुं
आत्ममायारतं देवं अवधूतं दिगम्बरं ।
भस्मोद्धूलितसर्वाङ्गं जटाजूटाधरं विभुं
चतुर्बाहुं उदराङ्गं प्रफुल्लकमलेक्षणम् ॥
ज्ञानयोगनिधिं विश्वगुरुं योगिजनप्रियम् ।
भक्तानुकम्पिनं सर्वसाक्षिणं सिद्धसेवितं
एवं यः सततं ध्यायेद्देवदेवं सनातनं
स मुक्तः सर्वपापेभ्यो निश्रेयसमवाप्नुयात् ॥
इति ओं सत्यं इति उपनिषत् ।

'He who would meditate in accordance with the mode laid down in the Upanishad on the deity Dattatreya, the Lord of Lords, Dattatreya the Lord, the gracious *Siva*, the tranquil, *Santa*, the Lord who is lustrous like *Sapphire*, the mighty one, delighting in his own marvellous power, investing *Atman*, the Lord whose activities are his sport, the Lord who is the one philosopher, the Lord who has the cardinal directions as his garments, the Lord whose entire limbs are smeared with holy ashes, the Lord who wears the crown of matted hair, the glorious Lord, the Lord four-armed, and invested with distinguished limbs, the Lord with eyes opened wide like full-blown lotus flowers, the Lord who is the treasure-trove of knowledge and discipline, the Lord who is the world-teacher, the Lord who is dear to the yogis, the Lord who is tender to his devotees, the Lord who is the witness of all and the Lord who is served by accomplished adepts, such a one released from all sins will attain beatific bliss. Thus aum! the truth. Thus the Upanishad.'

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HYMN UNTO VISHNU

(Ascribed to Acharya Sankara)

K. KUNHIKAVAMMA

श्रीविष्णुकेशादिपादान्तस्तोत्रम् ।

स्मर मानस मौकुन्दं मकुटं मणिमण्डितम्
केशांश्च सजलाम्भोदनीलकुञ्चितकोमलान्
कुलिशायुधवन्द्यांघ्रेः कुटिलालकसञ्चयम्
ललाटं पङ्कजाक्षस्य पञ्चमीचन्द्रसन्निभम्
कुसुमायुधकोदण्डमण्डलाभे भ्रुवो विभोः
नलिनान्तर्दलनिभे नयने नरकद्विषः
श्वासामोदभ्रमत् भृंगसङ्कुलां स्मर नासिकाम्
कपोलौ मकराकारकुण्डलद्युतिमण्डितौ
अब्धिजादुग्धपीयूषमधरं विद्रुमप्रभम्
तारहारातिविशदान्दशनान्दानवद्विषः
इन्दीवरनिभाङ्गस्य स्मर मन्दस्मितं हरेः
वैकुण्ठस्य सदा कण्ठं स्मर कौस्तुभभूषितम्
तुङ्गायततरङ्गाभौ भुजौ भज विभूषितौ
स्मर वक्षस्थलं विष्णोर्वत्सश्रीहारशोभितम्
मध्यं वारिजनेत्रस्य रोमराजिविराजितम्
दामोदरीयमुदरं दुरितापहरं स्मर
भुवनाधिपतेश्चेतः स्मर नाभिसरोरुहम्
जघनं जगदीशस्य सदा शास्यं मुदा भज
सन्ध्याभ्रकपिशच्छायमम्बरं स्मर शार्ङ्गिणः
स्फुरद्रत्नौपरचितां काञ्चीं विद्युत्प्रभां विभोः

HYMN UNTO VISHNU FROM HEAD TO FOOT

1. Think, O mind! of the crown of Mukunda, adorned with gems;
2. Also the hair, soft, curly and dark like watery clouds
3. The cluster of His curly forelocks whose feet are to Indra venerable
4. The brow of Pankajāksha resembling the fifth moon
5. The two eye brows of the Lord with beauty of cupid's circular bow
6. The two eyes of Narakāri (foe of Naraka) akin to lotus petals innermost.
7. Call to mind the tiny nose surrounded by bees, fluttering in joy of the sweet breath
8. The two cheeks shining with the lustre of makara-shaped earrings
9. The lips of coral splendour with nectar by Lakshmi enjoyed
10. The teeth of the foe of demons, than stars and pearls more resplendant.
11. Think of the smile of Hari with form like lotus blue.
12. Recollect always that neck of Vaikuntha, decked with Kaustubha jewel.
13. Worship the two arms ornamented and handsome like lofty long waves.
14. Remember Vishnu's broad chest, shining with Srivatsa (mark), Lakshmi and necklace;
15. The waist of the Lotus-eyed, lovely by streaks of hair
16. Reflect on Dāmodara's belly, capable of dispelling sins.
17. Meditate O, mind! on the navel lotus of the All-powerful
18. Worship with joy the hips of the Lord of the universe ever worthy of praise.
19. Bring to mind Śārngin's garment, yellowish brown as cloud at dusk;
20. The girdle of the Omnipotent, studded with cluster of gems and of lightning gleam.

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स्मर नारायणस्योरू करीन्द्रकरसन्निभौ
21. Think of Nārayana's thighs resembling elephant trunk;

जानुनी विशदे वृत्ते दर्पणोदरसप्रभे
22. The knees clear, round and bright as the interior of mirror.

इन्द्रनीलमहादण्डद्युती जंघे मधुद्विषः
23. The calf muscles of the foe of Madhu, shining like huge rods of sapphire.

कूर्मापराङ्गरुचिरे प्रपदे संस्मर प्रभोः
24. Well reflect on the Lord's feet, like tortoise-back graceful;

नखान्नतामरव्रातकिरीटमणिमण्डितान्
25. The nails adorned by gems on the crests of hosts of Gods, prostrated;

चक्रायुधस्य चरणौ विक्रान्तभुवनत्रयौ
26. The feet of Chakrāyudha (disc weaponed) that traversed the three worlds.

क्षीरार्णवे घनश्यामं स्मर पीताम्बरं हरिम्
27. Meditate on Hari of yellow garb, dark like cloud, in the milky ocean,

भोगीन्द्र भोगशयने शयानं पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
28. The Purushottama, reclining on the body of the Lord of serpents.

श्रीविष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रम् ।

HYMN UNTO VISHNU FROM FOOT TO HEAD

रेखारूपाब्जकुलिशशङ्खमत्स्यांघ्रिपङ्कजम्
1. Whose lotus-feet possess in lines, lotus, thunderbolt, conch and fish

अदभ्रशुभ्रनखराविभ्राजितजगत्त्रयम्
2. Who has illumined the three worlds with toe-nails richly white

प्रपदद्युतिविध्वस्तविपुलच्छविकच्छपम्
3. Who, by the grandeur of feet, the beauty of tortoise pushed behind,

मयूरगळसङ्काशजंघायुगलशोभितम्
4. Is graced by the pair of legs (calf muscles) akin to peacock's neck

जानुसम्पुटकासक्तमुनिमानसदर्पणम्
5. Has his casket-knees attached to sages' minds of mirror

मधुकैटभदैतेयभयदोरुद्वयान्वितम्
6. Is possessed of a pair of thighs instilling fear in demons Madhu and Kaitabha,

जघनाभोगविद्युतहस्तिमस्तकवैभवम्
7. Who, by the expanse of hips, dispelled the glory of elephant's head,

नवपङ्कजकिञ्जल्कपिशंगामलवाससम्
8. Is clad in garment pure and yellow as filaments of lotus fresh,

कटीतटदृढाबद्धतटिद्विमलमेखलम्
9. Who, round the waist has fast tied a girdle of lightning lustre,

चतुराननसंविष्टशुभनाभिसरोरुहम्
10. Has Brahma seated in the navel lotus

चराचरगणाकीर्णजगतापूरितोदरम्
11. Has the universe of animates and inanimates filled up in the belly,

कमलाकुचकुम्भाक्तघुसृणारुणवक्षसम्
12. And has, with the red sandal paste smeared on Lakshmi's breasts, his chest reddened

विपुलायतदोर्दण्डविजितासुरयूथपम्
13. Who with huge long arms vanquished the demon hosts

प्रतिबिम्बितलोकौघशुभकौस्तुभकन्धरम्
14. Whose neck wore the Kaustubha jewel, in which are mirrored all the worlds,

सान्द्रसिन्दूरसन्दोहसुन्दराधरपल्लवम्
15. Who has lips like sprouts, lovely heap of thick red-lead,

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कुन्देन्दुशंखधवलदन्तपंक्तिविराजितम्

16. And is radiated by rows of teeth white as jasmine, moon and conch

अमन्दमन्दहसितद्युतिदीपितदिङ्मुखम्

17. And with brightness of profuse smile illumined the face of quarters,

कुण्डलद्युतिसंवृष्टगण्डमण्डलमण्डितम्

18. And has round cheeks, with radiance of earrings beautified,

तिलसूनसमोदारमृद्वलोन्नतनासिकम्

19. Who is possessed of nose lofty, soft and graceful like tila (sesamum) blossom

मिहिरोदयसंफुल्लसरसीरुहलोचनम्

20. Who has eyes like lotus blooming at the rise of sun

पवनान्दोलिताम्भोधिलहरीरुचिरभ्रुवम्

21. Has eye brows attractive like waves in a sea tossed by wind

कुटिलालकसञ्छन्ननिटिलामृतरोचिषम्

22. Has moon like brow screened by curly forelocks

सुरसत्तमविक्षिप्तवरपुष्पशिरोरुहम्

23. On whose hair are strewn by the best of Gods the best of flowers

महामणिगणाकीर्णहाटकोरुकिरीटिनम्

24. Who has precious crown studded with many a costly gem

कनकांगदकेयूरकटकाङ्गुलिभूषणैः

25. Who with golden bracelets, armlets, rings for fingers,

किरीटहारग्रैवेयकाञ्चिनूपुरकुण्डलैः

26. Crown, necklace and other ornaments for the neck, girdle, anklets and earrings

श्रीवत्सोदरबन्धाद्यैरलङ्कारैरलङ्कृतम्

27. And with Srivatsa (mark) and belt for waist and others, is well adorned,

तमालनीलवपुषं विलोलवनमालिनम्

28. Whose form is bluish like Tamāla, and who has garlands, tossing about, of flowers and leaves,

मृणालधवलस्निग्धब्रह्मसूत्रोपशोभितम्

29. Who is radiant with sacred thread white and soft as lotus-stalk,

सितोर्ध्वपुण्ड्रप्रभया विराजितमुखाम्बुजम्

30. Whose lotus-face is lustrous with brightness of white Pundra mark,

असितालककेशाढ्यं सितदन्तनखप्रभम्

31. Who is dignified with curly dark forelocks and hair and is radiant with white teeth and nails

जपारुणाधरापाङ्गपाणिपादतलान्वितम्

32. Has lips, glance, palm and sole red like Japa flower

तुङ्गगुल्फं निम्ननाभिं समजंघायुगान्वितम्

33. Who is of lofty ankle, deep navel and of even shanks,

व्यूढोरस्कं गूढजत्रुं वलित्रितयशोभितम्

34. Of expanded chest, concealed clavicle, and is with three folds shining,

ह्रस्वकण्ठं दीर्घबाहुं वृत्तोरुं चतुराङ्गुलिम्

35. Who is short-necked, long-armed, round-thighed and with well-formed fingers

अल्पस्मितं विशालाक्षं रोमराजिविराजितम्

36. Who is of gentle smile, broad-eyes, and shining with lines of hair

घनगम्भीरनिनदमुदितामरबर्हिणम्

37. Who with voice deep like clouds delighted the peacocks of Gods

स्फुरदम्भोजकरया रमया समुपासितम्

38. Who is attended to by Ramā (Lakshmi) with waving lotus in hand

कलमाग्रलसत्बाहुलतया धरया श्रितम्

39. And is attended to by Mother Earth with creeper-like arms shining with heads of corn,

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भुजङ्गभोगशयनं विहंगाधिपवन्दितम्
40. Who reposes on the body of serpent and is worshipped by lord of birds,

जलजासिगदाशार्ङ्गाद्यायुधैः परिवारितम्
41. Who is surrounded by weapons, lotus, sword, club, Śārnga (bow) and others

मत्स्यकूर्मादिभिस्स्वांशैर्दशभिस्समुपासितम्
42. Who is served by ten of his own forms, fish, tortoise and others

महेशेन्द्रादिभिश्चैव सनकाद्यैरभिष्टुतम्
43. Who is extolled by Siva, Indra and others and Sanaka and others,

उपनन्दसुनन्दाद्यैः पार्षदैरभिवन्दितम्
44. Who is bowed to by attendants beginning with Upananda, and Sunanda

वीणां वादयमाने तु नारदेऽपाङ्गदायिनम्
45. Who when Nārada plays on lute lends his glance to him,

आह्लादयन्तं प्रह्लादं स्मितचन्द्रिकया स्वया
46. Who by his own smile of moonlight delights Prahlada,

निशान्ते यस्समुत्थाय स्मरेदेवं जनार्दनम्
47. Him, Janārdana in this form, whoever, rising at the close of night, remembers

इहाभिलाषितान्प्राप्य सोऽन्ते व्रजति केशवम्।
48. Attaining desires here, he in the end reaches Kesava.

THE GODDESS OF BEAUTY

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

(Translated from Tamil by R. S. Murti.)

On a dim moon-lit night
I saw this in a dream :
She was a young girl — sweet sixteen
Her face was bright as a full moon.
Even the crescent will envy her smile.
Like a flash of lightning, she came to me and said :
" Don't sleep, get up and see me ! "
At once I got up.
Lo and behold ! the Goddess of Beauty !

" Which is superior : Yoga or Tapas ? " I asked.
" Yoga is Tapas ; Tapas, yoga," she said.
" Is reality monistic or dualistic ? " I asked.
" It is monistic, dualistic, pluralistic," she said.
" Does Rain feel the agony of Thirst ? " I asked.
" Yes, if not, why does it rain
So quickly with delight ? " she said.

" Does time transcend the mind ? " I asked.
" Time is a tool for the mind," she said.
" Shall I attain my heart's desire ? " I asked.
" You will — once or twice," she said.
" Can we bid our thoughts ? " I asked.
" We can, if we think we can," she said.
" Shall I tell you the source or not ? " I asked.
She showed her face with full of grace.
I was gratified.

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THE SPIRIT UNDERLYING THE FORM OF VEDIC SACRIFICE

JOGIRAJ BASU

In the Vedic age the spirit of sacrifice was never lost sight of though the form was made much of. Behind the sacrificial liturgy and its vast paraphernalia, behind the externals of sacerdotal religion we find the glimmerings of the spirit of religion, the essence of sacrifice. Yajna or sacrifice was looked upon as an organic whole. It is often described as an organic being or 'purusa' termed Yajna-purusha in the Brāhmana texts of the Vedic literature. The different aspects of a sacrifice are compared to the limbs of a living being. In A.B. 2-8-3, 4 we come across a detailed comparison of these limbs. Prātaranuvāka is the head of the sacrifice, the two grahas called Upamsu and Antaryāma are its two breaths called Prāna and Apāna etc. The S.B. 6-1-1 identifies the fire-altar with the primal purusa termed Prajāpati, the lord of creation. 'That same person became Prajāpati. And that Person which became Prajāpati is this very Agni whose altar is now being built'. The fire-altar is symbolic of the reconstruction of the universe in the shape of Prajāpati. In this mystic symbolism the human sacrificer or yajamāna is equated with Agni which is the divine counterpart of the human sacrificer; Agni the fire-god, again, is equated with the lord of creation, Prajāpati. Thus the human sacrificer is ultimately identified with Prajāpati through his identification with Agni. The Primal Being which is the fountainhead of all creation called Purusa described and eulogised in the Rigvedic hymn of creation (R.V. X.90) has assumed the name of Prajāpati in the Brs. The sacrificer achieves union with the lord of creation and is removed from the world of illusion and sufferings to the world of ever-lasting bliss when he shuffles off the mortal coil. In this act of union the true nature of Prajāpati and the sacrificer is revealed as intelligence, and the S.B. urges the seeker of truth to meditate upon the self 'made up of intelligence and endowed with a body of spirit, a form of light and an ethereal nature'. Thus we find a deeper significance, a spiritual and speculative meaning underlying the mechanical sacerdotalism or mass of liturgy. Sacrifice is looked upon not only as a cold formality or enormously fabricated ritual but also as an organic whole imbued with spirit and intelligence. In all the Brāhmana texts time and again sacrifice has been identified with Vishnu the supreme deity. The expression 'Yajno vat Vishnuh' occurs repeatedly in the Brs. It means, Sacrifice is Vishnu. In the Vedic pantheon whenever a deity is invoked he or she is eulogised and propitiated as the supreme Godhead. This feature of Vedic religion is a far cry from polytheism of the ancient Greek religion. To differentiate this outstanding feature of Vedic pantheon MaxMuller has coined a term Henotheism or Kathenotheism which means whenever a deity is worshipped he or she is propitiated as the Supreme Godhead. In the Greek pantheon gods and goddesses are not viewed from that angle of vision; they are endowed with limited powers. Thus this special feature of Vedic religion places the deities on an equal footing and from this perspective Vishnu, Prajāpati, Agni, Āditya etc. are identical notwithstanding the attributes peculiar to each deity that mark out one from the other. Hence when sacrifice is equated with a particular deity the sense is that it is equated with or identified with the Supreme Godhead. The sacrificer is identified with the sacrifice or Yajna. 'Yajamāna is verily the Yajna', 'Sacrificer is verily the sacrifice', says the A.B. and S.B. Hence the sacrificer is also identified with the supreme Deity; in other words, the end or purpose of

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sacrifice is identification of the sacrificer with the presiding deity of the sacrifice. Through sacrifice the sacrificer attains union with (Sāyujya) and the same form (Sārūpya) and same place (Sālokya) of the deity. S.B. I-5-2-6 states that not to speak of human beings even the gods attained to the status of godhood by worshipping Yajna. As the deity is immortal the sacrificer also attains immortality. When an oblation is offered in a sacrifice the external form of the offering is called 'Homa' which consists in offering oblations in the sacrificial fire-pit. But the contemplation accompanying the offering, the mental aspect of the external act called 'Bhāvanā' constitutes Yāga. '*Yāgastu Bhāvanārūpah*'. The external oblations are physical visible ones whereas the mental offerings are invisible psychical ones which go to constitute the essence of sacrifice of which the external ones are the form. Shorn of its mental or contemplative aspect sacrifice defeats its very purpose. 'The invisible mental offerings', observes the A.B., 'help the sacrificer to attain immortality' (2-7-4). This intended union of the sacrificer with the deity is also clear from certain sacrificial rites. The following ceremony is an illustration in point. After the completion of a particular sacrifice the sacrificer prepares a miniature image of himself with the Kusa grass called Prastara and throws the same in the sacrificial fire-pit. When the image is burnt up the sacrificer thinks his mortal frame is burnt up and his disembodied soul has attained union with the deity. He thus considers himself to be one with Vishnu and takes three strides uttering the Vedic hymn,—'Here Vishnu strides, placing three steps'.

Explaining the significance of the term 'Āhuti' or oblation the A.B. observes,—'Oblation of fire, oblation of butter and Soma—all these oblations are offerings of immortality. All these make one disembodied and immortal' (2-7-4). Of course this immortality is not equivalent to the final liberation of the individual soul—the doctrine of Moksha or emancipation adumbrated in the Upanisads, rather a far cry from it. The immortality attained through sacrifice means union with a personal deity; in other words it amounts to attainment of 'Devatva' or deityhood in heaven whereas the Moksha of the Upanisads means complete absorption of the individual soul into the Impersonal Unqualified Godhead or All-soul.

Thus we find that the spirit or metaphysical aspect of sacrifice was never lost sight of though it was clouded by the vast mass of rituals or externals of religion. The spirit and the form developed side by side and in the long run the spirit gained the upper hand which tended to transcend ritualism or the so-called mechanical sacerdotalism. This transcendental tendency found expression in the metaphysics of the Āranyakas which finally crystallised into the philosophy of the Upanisads which decry external sacrifice and rituals in emphatic terms. The germ of this transcendental spirit which set in the anti-ritual reaction may be traced in the very Brāhmana portion of the Veda. It is wholly misleading to regard the Brs. as champions of mechanical ritualism which denounce the path of knowledge. No doubt they are epitomes of liturgies but they also lay stress on the importance of the spirit and eulogise knowledge. In the age of the Brs. that is, the mid-Vedic age burdened with the vast mass and minute details of sacrificial rites people began to doubt and question the efficacy of sacrifice. They not only doubted the efficacy of rites but also attempted to prove the ill-effects of the same. They were quite in the dark whether a man achieved piety or incurred sin by performing sacrifices. Observes S.B. (I-2-5-24) in categorical terms,—'Men were possessed with disbelief (asraddhā); those who sacrifice become sinners, and those who do not sacrifice become righteous or attain good.' Thus a time came in the Vedic age when people developed a sceptical attitude with regard to the utility of sacrifices and desisted from performing rituals. Urged on

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by the gods Brihaspati Āngirasa met the people and asked them the reason of their not performing sacrifices. They replied that they had stopped performance of rituals because they regarded these performances to be futile and the sacrificers to be great sinners. This challenge thrown by the people against the liturgical school had to be met by the priestly class. This challenge proves beyond a shade of doubt that already a mass movement was afoot against the sacrificial cult in the Vedic age. The cultured mind realised that the external rites alone devoid of reverence or the mere utterance of hymns *minus* the mental factor failed to reach the gods and thus defeated the purpose of sacrifice. To make sacrifice effective mind must accompany the utterance and the performance. The sacrificer must put his whole heart in the deed to prevent mechanical ritualism. 'Mind and speech', observes the S.B., 'when yoked together, convey the sacrifice to the gods' (I-4-4-I). Importance was attached to reverence or belief without which sacrifice failed to achieve its goal. Even gods are of lesser importance to him who has realised the importance of Sraddhā. Sage Atri declares Sraddhā or reverence to be the deity in the Taittirīya Samhitā (7-1-8-2). In the words of the K.B.(7-4) 'He who sacrifices with reverence and faith his piety never wanes'. Goddess Sraddhā, according to T.B. (3-12-3-2) 'was the first product of Truth. Sraddhā maintains the universe and is the very foundation of the world'. Commenting on this passage Sāyana remarks that the Vedic and worldly rites of a person devoid of reverence become futile. In the absence of earthly oblations Sraddhā alone has been enjoined to be offered mentally as oblation. This is known as Sraddhā-homa or offering of reverence; it is also termed Bhāvanā-homa as Bhāvanā or the mental factor of meditation predominates here. The A.B. cites Agnihotra sacrifice as an instance in point. If the milch cow for the milk-offering of Agnihotra is not available one should offer the oblations with reverence alone, observes the A.B. (5-25-2). The sacrificer in that case had to utter the words, 'Aham sraddhām juhomi', i.e., 'I offer reverence as oblation'. One had to perform the Agnihotra sacrifice with his wife. How will a widower who is unwilling to remarry perform the said sacrifice? The solution given in the A.B. (7-32-10) reads thus; 'In the case of such a widower Sraddhā is his wife and Satya (Truth) is the yajamāna or sacrificer. Reverence and Truth make an ideal couple; this couple conquers the heavenly regions'. As this performance is wholly mental it is called Mānasa Agnihotra. This striking passage and similar ones quoted in the foregoing lines drive home the fact that the Brāhmana texts do not minimise the importance of faith or reverence. Herein may be traced the beginnings of Āranyaka philosophy which under-rated the value of external rituals and recommended mental sacrifice in its place. External purity derived from rituals and uttering of hymns is substituted by inner purity and meditation. Remarks the Aitareya Āranyaka (3-2-6),—'To what end shall we repeat the Veda? To what purpose shall we sacrifice? For, we sacrifice breath in speech and speech in breath.' The mental Agnihotra referred to above is termed spiritual and internal 'Ādhyātmikam Āntaram Agnihotram' by the Sānkhyāyana Āranyaka. 'In that mental Agnihotra Sraddhā is the milk, speech is fuel, truth is the oblation, and wisdom, par excellence, is the soul'. The excessive ritualism of the Brs. finds no place in the Āranyakas which record the reaction that naturally stirred the cultured mind. Hence Āranyakas do not embody rules for sacrificial rites. Rather, the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice and priestly philosophy find exposition in the Āranyakas. Meditation on the Absolute and faith constitute the essence of sacrifice according to their teaching.

From the above discussion it is abundantly clear that the Brs. the so-called manuals of sacrifice do not lose sight of the spirit of sacrifice though in the Vedic period this spirit or essence was burdened with the complicated form which gained in bulk as ages rolled on.

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Due importance was attached to both inner and external purity and mental sacrifice was enjoined and eulogised. Reverence and truth were regarded as the essence of sacrifice. Through truthfulness, reverence and firm faith one could and can achieve the end of sacrifice.

Abbreviations used in the article :—

A.B. = Aitareya Brāhmana.
S.B. = Satapatha Brāhmana.
Brs. = Brāhmanas.
K.B. = Kausitaki Br.
T.B. = Taittirīya Br.
Br. = Brāhmana.

EAST AND WEST : ABERCROMBIE

(*An enquiry into the philosophical speculation of Lascelles Abercrombie*, 1881-1938)

R. S. DESIKAN

As we float down the stream of ages, we witness that there has been a ceaseless commerce of thought between the east and the west. England which has been in touch with the world's thought has had her own rich harvest of spiritual experience. Abercrombie who is in the tradition has drunk deep at the wells of mystical experience and thought. To have an adequate conception of Abercrombie and his achievement, it is better we become acquainted with the general trend of thought and experience that has gone before him.

Aldous Huxley in his *Perennial Philosophy* has brought home to us the fundamental unity of the Odyssey of the human spirit. In his ceaseless exploration of the warring sects and creeds of the world, and in his daring adventures among realms of thought and ideas, he has discovered a golden thread of unity running through the bewildering varieties of human experience.

In rare heaven-sent moments one may think what a Plato has thought and feel what a saint has felt ; for there is a motion and a spirit that rolls through all things. One's heart may throb with the song of the poet :

'I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Ceasar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart and Shakespeare's strain.'

A journey through the countries of the mind may reveal, to our wonder and surprise, identical thought and expression in hidden and unexpected quarters. This similarity of thought and expression, may be either due to the age-long wanderings of ideas from one region to another or to the parallelism of thought. In Parmenides of Greece, we find an adumbration of the illusion theory of Sankara. According to him the 'One' exists ; and the world around us is merely a trick of the senses. Shelley embodies this idea in his poems. He has a deep conviction that life like a dome of many-coloured glass stains the white radiance of eternity. With Blake and Shelley, nature is like the painted veil. She hides the unknown ; but she reveals the baffling mystery of life to Wordsworth. Through intense communion with nature, he has caught a glimpse of the splendour of the soul within. He has experienced the mystical trance in which he is laid asleep in body and has become a living soul. Perhaps to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. The immanent transcendental idealism of the East finds eloquent expression in 'Tintern Abbey'.

In Browning's *Paracelsus* we come across the following lines :

'There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness ; and around

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Wall upon Wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it, and makes all error; and 'to know'
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.....

They cannot but throw a flood of light on the identical truth perceived by our sages of old. Francis Thomson describes in his *Hound of Heaven,* God's relentless pursuit of man down the arches of years. Vaishnava and Saiva poets have sung of this glorious aspect of their mystical experience. In their splendid vision they find that God needs man more than he needs Him. God fulfils his purpose through mankind.

Tagore sings in the following strain :

My poet is it Thy delight to see Thy creation through my eyes and to stand at the portals of my ears silently to listen to Thy own eternal harmony.

A. E. and W. B. Yeats have been profoundly influenced by Eastern thought and philosophy. A. E. in his poem *The Earth Breath* has given expression to the hidden majesty of soul :

'And the restless ploughman passes
Turns and, wandering,
Deep beneath his rustic habit
Finds himself a King.'

From a few striking instances we have given, one may easily derive the conclusion that mystical experience and the tracking of the reality to its subtlest retreats are not the mere product and monopoly of one age or clime but the result of the eternal urge of the human spirit for ever probing the mysteries of life.

It is no wonder that the poems of Abercrombie who is saturated with their thoughts have taken their mould, tone and colour. He was educated at Malvern and Victoria Universities. He is a poet and a critic. His robust commonsense, the alertness of his understanding, the quickness of his perception and the free play of his mind — all this finds expression in his Theory of Poetry and *Idea of great Poetry.* In his *Towards the new Theory of Art* we become keenly alive to the great influence of Croce, the Italian critic on him.

Most of us are of opinion that the critic in man may kill the poet in him. But in Abercrombie as in T. S. Eliot we find a rare combination. To a certain extent, the critic in Arnold has stifled the creator in him. However, one must not forget that the creative artist is also a critic. In the words of T. S. Eliot 'the critical activity finds its highest, its true fulfilment in a kind of union in the labour of the artist.

The poems of Abercrombie are full of a consuming zeal for the unknown. They are highly intellectual and philosophical; and a high seriousness pervades them. They are born of the travail of the spirit longing for freedom from the prison-bars of the senses. The bitter cry of the soul for its enfranchisement and its heavenward flight from the fetters of the senses seems to be the keynote of almost all his poems.

In his *Soul and Body* the poet speaks of their many married years. A dialogue between the Soul and Body takes place. First the body sings the joys of the senses; but the soul replies that they have begun to pall upon it; for it has become conscious of the lights of unaware ecstasy.

It goes beyond the senses, beauty and fear, nay beyond wonder and is lost in perfect ecstasy :

'Woe for me if I should dare
Partake in person now I see
The lights of unaware ecstasy.
I must not in amazement stay,
Henceforth I am for a way
Beyond thy senses, beauty and fear,
Beyond wonder even.
I want neither earth nor heaven,
I will not have ken or desire,
But only joy higher and higher
Burning knowledge in its white fire,
Till I am no more aware
And no more saying 'I am I,'
But all is perfect ecstasy.'

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W. B. Yeats has created a similar situation. In his *A Dialogue of Self and Soul*, we find the soul striving to ascend the winding ancient stair, but it is dragged down into the world again. The Self says :

'We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest.'

Yeats cannot live in the intense inane. Even in his icy lonely tower he cannot but yearn for the sun-warmed earth, the moon-lit seas, the laughing waters and the smiling plains. But T. S. Eliot like Abercrombie strives to live in the world of the pure unalloyed spirit. Abercrombie sings it is all ecstasy, but one must go beyond it. Even knowledge is a hindrance in the onward path of the soul. 'Art too is a kind of refined sensuousness; and one must cry halt even to it,' says Aldous Huxley.

There is nothing daringly original in his statement; for it was long ago anticipated by Manikkavachakar who has enshrined it in a soul-stirring song of his. Abercrombie's last lines in the poem *Soul and Body* remind us of the Saiva Saint.

However, one must remember that even a state of ecstasy is not the final stage of the evolution of the soul. According to Sankara a state of Supreme happiness may imply a state of deepest misery.

There are several stages through which man journeys to the unknown. Out of the region of food 'annamaya' he wanders to the province of the vital breath; out of it he emerges into the sphere of the mind which flings open the doors of the discerning intellect. Out of the circle of intellect, man roams into the domain of reflected bliss. One has to pass through all the five sheaths. Besant with her keen and searching intellect has analysed in her *Five Sheaths* the eternal march of the Soul to all the regions outlined.

'The Trance' describes the immortal longings of the soul for its ultimate triumph over the barriers of time and space.

'I stood outside the burning rims of place,
Outside that corner, consciousness.
Then was I not in the midst of thee,
Lord God?'

One can achieve it only through knowledge 'painfully quarried and hewn fair.' It creates platforms of love and many a hanging stair of strong imagination. Knowledge, love and imagination are the watch-towers of the soul that strives to be greatly aware of the outer vastness :

'That so Man's mind, not conquered by his clay,
May sit above his fate,
Inhabiting the purpose of the stars,
And trade with his Eternity.'

In the *Fool's Adventure* the journey of the soul is painted with a touch of profound spiritual experience. The hermit advises the seeker to journey through the regions of mind rather than lands and tongues. It is all a journey within; and man cries out baffled while trying to give expression to the ineffable. Finally a voice within speaks to the seeker. The end of the dialogue between the Inner voice and the Speaker brings out in distinct unmistakable tone the message of the forest-dwelling sages of old.

Within : None else controls or portions Good and Bad.
Seeker : Then thou art God?
Within : Ay, many call me so
And yet though words were never large enough
To take me made, I have a better name.
Seeker : Then truly, who art thou?
Within : I am Thy Self.

In the *Sale of Saint Thomas* emphasis is laid on the absolute surrender of the soul; for in His will is our peace. In Saint Thomas Abercrombie recognizes a true carpenter bent on carving a palace made of souls. Saint Thomas is to go on a holy mission to India. But he is afraid that he may not be able to preach the truth against the 'bray of the gongs and horns of the Indian priests.'

He is filled with fear when he is about to launch out into the uncharted perilous seas in a cockle-shell. There is hesitation; there is doubt; but at times he lulls himself into a

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belief that in the mid-most ocean, he can be free from earthly attachments.

'And I could purify my mind from all
Worldly amazement by imagining
Beyond my senses into God's great Heaven,
If I were in mid sea.'

The currents and cross currents that have swept across Saint Thomas's mind have been described with the consummate skill of a great artist. His apprehensions come in crowds; and he dreads the fatal perils that may be in store for him in the far east. As he strives to depart, a noble stranger makes his appearance along the quay. The stranger is either God Himself or Christ. He makes the Saint realize that prudence is a deadly sin. One must take up the Cross and follow him even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

'Though must not therefore stoop thy spirit's sight
To pore only within the candle-gleam
Of conscious wit and reasonable brain;
But search into the sacred darkness lying
Outside thy knowledge of thyself, the vast
Measureless fate, full of the power of stars,
The outer noiseless heavens of thy soul.'

Abercrombie's poems may not satisfy A. E. Housman's definition of pure poetry; but one may say that they are the adventures of ideas and speculations on the journey of the spirit from the slimy earth to the star-lit dome of Heaven.

A survey of mystical experiences of all ages cannot but convince us of the supreme fact that there is neither East nor West; for all great souls meet on a higher platform of humanity.

GURU IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

(The Nature, Function and the Place of the Spiritual Master)

P. NAGARAJA RAO

'Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur devo Mahesvarah
Gurur ēva param Brahma tasmai sri Gurave namah'

Every spiritual tradition, that is virile has insisted on the necessity of our having a 'Guru'. The Guru is the spiritual Master who initiates us into the truths of the spiritual life. He shows us the way he has tread and steadies our faltering steps. The Sanskrit word Guru means 'the remover of ignorance'. The word *Gu* means darkness (andhakāra), *ru* means the remover of darkness. The Chāndogya declares, 'one who has a teacher alone knows'.[1] The spiritual aspirant who is desirous of religious experience is asked to approach a Guru. 'The Guru is characterised, by the composure of mind and has self-control. He is learned and devoted to Brahman'. We are asked to resort to such a one for instruction. Sankara commenting on the passage, exhorting us to seek a Guru, observes that 'even one, that is well versed in the scriptures should not set about seeking Brahman knowledge by himself'.[2] Resorting to a Guru is no mere convention nor is it a blind formality. It is not the evasion of one's responsibility, nor is it a case of dependence-complex. If one merely reads the religious scriptures as he does his novels and short stories, the effect of the scriptures on the reader is not the same as it is when it is taught by an illumined teacher, to the aspiring disciple. The scriptures are mere words, when we read them by ourselves. When they are taught to us, they strike us and remove the scales from our eyes. Aldous Huxley writes, (about hallowed scriptures which we often repeat and read for ourselves) 'the traditionally hallowed writings tend to breed, not indeed contempt, but something which,

[1] *Chāndogya*; 6, 14, 2, 'acaryavan purusho veda.'

[2] *Mundaka*; 1, 2, 12, 'Sastrajnopi svatantryena brahma jnananvesanam na kuryad.'

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for practical purposes, is almost as bad—namely a kind of reverential insensibility, a stupor of the spirit, and an inward deafness to the meaning of the sacred words'.[3] Sravana is the Guru's teaching of the scriptures to us. William Pen the great author exclaimed, 'There is something nearer to us than the scriptures, to wit, the world in the heart from which all scripture comes'. That is the Guru. The Svetāsvatara Upanishad concludes that 'the truths taught (in the scripture) shine forth in the high-souled men, who have an equal degree of devotion to their Guru as to God.'

The nature of spiritual knowledge is such that we cannot know it through the probity of our learning nor the acuteness of our intellect. The Katha declares, 'That it must be imparted to us by someone else.' (I, 2, 9). 'It becomes known only when taught by one who has become identified with the spirit.' (I, 2, 8.)

The Guru does not go out broadcasting the truths to all and sundry. We must seek him in all reverence. The Gita says,[4] 'Seek the Guru, who are men of wisdom, vision and have realised the truth, by humble reverence, by inquiring and service, and they will instruct you.' In the choice of the Guru one must be earnest, sincere and critical. One has to be wary about choosing his Guru. It is the most complex task in our age, which is full of Messiahs and Moseses each promulgating a cult of his own and asking people to surrender to him and be saved.

The Guru represents the living voice. The way or the mode made use of by the Guru in transforming the disciple's state of consciousness and the way he imparts wisdom to him, are not easily explicable in terms of rational and discursive thought. The effect produced by the Guru on the disciple is immediate and sudden. Sri Ramakrishna gave all his spiritual wealth to Vivekananda in a moment by placing his hands on his head. Christ violently threw down Saul from the horseback, when he was on the road to Damascus. This pulled the scales from his eyes and gave the vision splendid and made him a new man. Arjuna, the close companion of the Lord, the representative man, was endowed by the Lord with divine eyes (divyacakshus) to see the Visvarupa of the Lord. It is the Guru who shows us the path, and dispels the darkness that enshrouds us. It is again the masters, that are the channels through which divine light trickles down into this world of blindness. They are the salt of the earth who keep things disinfect. A world without them will be a world totally blind. It is only a close companionship with such men that can keep us free and untainted from the attritions of our over-organised mechanical age.

The true master instils into us a new vision and a splendid discipline. The discipline is called Vinaya and the Guru is called Vineta. One-third of Lord Buddha's teaching refers to discipline. It is called the Vinayapitaka. Sankara in the first verse of his Sata-sloki describes the Guru as superior to the alchemist for the simple reason that the alchemist can only transmute the base metal into gold, but he cannot impart to it the very transmuting power itself. That the Guru does; in this he surpasses the alchemist. The Guru is indispensable to us, if we mean earnestly to seek truth. When Alexander was asked, why he showed great respect and reverence to his instructor Aristotle, than to his father, he replied, 'From my teacher I obtain eternal life; and from my father a perishable existence. My father brought me down from heaven to earth, but Aristotle has raised me from earth to heaven.' Shri Aurobindo regards that four things are necessary for spiritual realisation and Guru is one of them and the other three being, enthusiasm (Utsaha), Time (Kala) and Scriptures. The Guru is the God on earth for men who aspire for the spiritual life. Count Keyserling in his celebrated travelogue observes, (after visiting India), 'If a Guru appeared to me today and said, "Come", I would follow him blindly.'

[3] A. Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, p. 4.
[4] *The Gita*, IV. 34.

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IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

P. M. BHASKARAN NAMBUDIRIPAD

Man is unique in his make up when compared to other animals. He is aware of himself as well as other things which he sees around him. This self-awareness which is the chief characteristic that distinguishes man from other animals, enables him to think of the past and understand the present, so as to plan the future most effectively. By observation and experience, man is able to get some knowledge of the universe, of which he is an insignificant part. He can think for himself, and act according to his will, by choosing between alternatives. He can look into a problem rationally so as to find a solution for it by means of his intellect. Unlike other creatures, man is, by keeping himself separately or rather, in a detached manner, able to find a meaning of the existence of the entire cosmos and foresee its destiny. He dominates and guides the whole vegetable as well as the animal kingdom by the superior power of his intellect. He is even able to find the principles and movements of heavenly bodies like sun, moon, stars and innumerable other planets which are almost invisible to his naked eye and their inter-relations, in addition to his knowledge of mother earth and its relation with those celestial bodies.

But alas! the primitive man had to pay the price for the advantage of a superior intellect he possessed. For him the whole world is confined within his immediate experience and observation. In those early days, when man was quite ignorant of himself and the universe in which he lived, he might have thrilled and wondered at the sight of the mysterious nature ever wrapt in ineffable beauty with its various phenomena like lightning and thunder, rain and storm. But this naive wonder and awe he felt at the sight of the amazing nature, gradually led him to a curious search for the reality or truth that lies at the back of these phenomena and to understand its principles. As a result of this thirst for knowledge and the wonder and joy he felt at the sight of the bewildering nature, man tried to understand all things which he saw in the external world. But to his surprise and disappointment he could not make anything out of it and the only answer he received then was a long fearful silence. In spite of his early failures in his quest for knowledge or rather in his quest for truth man has been now successful, to a large extent in conquering the external world by his powerful weapon of intellect. Thus when we look back to our early days of progress, we cannot but wonder at the tremendous progress we have made in almost all fields of knowledge.

Thus, a little reflection may convince us that the earliest thoughts of men were on external world. But gradually with the increase of the knowledge of the external world man began to probe deep into nature and its working. His search was not for phenomena but for the ultimate reality that lies at the back of them. After years of search and investigation of external world, man came to the conclusion that the life-giving principle or power or Brahman as it is known working behind all things is same though it has been manifested in various forms. As a result of this success of man in his search of external world and its working, man's attention for the first time, turned on his own inner world and its working. But to his surprise he found some sort of similarity between his own inner world and the external world in their working. After a rigorous search of his inner world he discovered that Atman is the life-giving principle or reality that lies at the back of our senses, mind and intellect. But here he did not stop. His long cherished urge for finding a unitary and unifying force behind everything or in other words, his thirst to find unity in diversity found expression here. He came to the

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conclusion after a thorough investigation that the life-giving principle or truth that lies at the back of the phenomena in the external world is nothing other than the life-giving principle or truth that lies at the back of the senses, mind and intellect, in the internal world of man. This desire of man to find a unitary and unifying force working behind the phenomena has been admirably fulfilled in this Brahman-Atman equation and it finds its expression in the famous Vedic utterance 'Ekam sat, vipra bahudha vadanti', (meaning, truth is one, but the sages express it in various ways).

The nature of reality or truth has ever been a puzzling study to a student of philosophy, for it is often surrounded with mystery. Each system of Philosophy has got a different conception of reality in accordance with its views and ideals. Perhaps, it may be due to its indeterminate and undefinable nature that reality has been viewed in different ways with different conceptions. But this quest after truth or reality has been going on from time immemorial without arriving at a concrete, unanimous, definite conclusion as to what exactly the nature of reality is. It may be the fascination of that great unknown that inspires this spirit of adventure in man resulting in a number of discoveries and inventions in both the external and internal world of man. But human intellect has got only a very limited sphere in its working beyond which it cannot go. That is, it is unable to go beyond the Sphere of Time, Space and Causation. Secondly, the validity of all our experiences is determined by the facts and experiences of the waking life alone with the exclusion of other states of the soul like dream, sleep and Turiya. Thirdly, our sense-view or rather sense-perception is not the total view or whole view which includes senses and something which is beyond the senses whether it may be intuition or revelation. Hence human intellect is confined to a very limited sphere, and so, there is no wonder in our inability to comprehend the truth as it is, for truth is beyond our senses and waking experiences.

In spite of all these obstructions in our path to truth or perfection, we have still a conception of truth or perfection. This, perhaps, may be due to the fact that all creatures have been endowed with an instinct for perfection or truth. Every creature is trying to manifest this urge for perfection within its limited capacity, environment and circumstances. The difference is only in degree and not in kind. But in human beings, unlike the animals, this urge or instinct for perfection has reached a still higher plane of self-consciousness. Whereas in animals, this urge for perfection is only an instinct without a conscious purpose behind it, in human beings, this urge has become a consciously willed one, with a purpose behind it. It is this instinct for perfection that helps man to become more good, true and beautiful. It is this instinct for perfection or truth which rouses man from the lower plane of the sensuous pleasures to the higher plane of the spiritual ecstasy. This instinct for perfection endowed in him helps him to control and organise the sensuous pleasures and desires in such a way that they become instrumental to the fuller and truer life of the human spirit. Sensibility, by itself, will not yield the higher nature of the individual unless it is properly organised and well disciplined by the human spirit. It is this realisation and power of rising above the impulse of the moment — the sensual pleasures — that makes man a spiritual being. So it is this instinct for perfection in man that enables him to aspire after a spiritual life ignoring the sensual pleasures.

Now let us examine what exactly is the nature of truth and whether it is subjective or objective to our mind. According to Idealism, objects in the external world have no independent existence. That is, they exist in relation to our mind or ideas. For example, the colour of a rose does not exist in the rose itself but its colour belongs to our perception. For instance, to a person with a jaundiced eye, the colour of rose is yellow. In other words, it is our individual perception that determines whether a rose is red or yellow and so this quality of redness or yellowness, does

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not exist in the nature of the rose, but varies according to one's perception of it. These idealists even go to the extent of saying that the very existence of the objects in the external world is due to our perception of it. According to this theory, truth exists only in relation to our mind and so does not exist outside in the nature of things. Let us examine the validity of this theory. If truth exists only in our mind, why can't we experience it when there is no object corresponding to our perception? That is, to experience the perception of an object in the external world, an object must exist in the world outside without which our perception will be aimless. For example, we cannot perceive a flower in the sky. Therefore the first condition necessary for our knowledge of things in the external world is that an object must exist independently of our mind, and without knowledge and existence truth cannot be experienced. So an object must exist in the outside world for experiencing truth. Again, if objects exist in our mind, how can we experience the perception of rose as different from the perception of a jar? So the existence of an object does not depend upon our mind alone. In other words, truth of the existence of an object does not lie in our perception of the object alone, but depends upon to a large extent on the nature of things themselves.

According to the realists, objects in the external world have an independent existence from our mind or ideas. In other words, the existence of an object does not depend upon our perception of it and so exists as it is without any relation to our mind. A little reflection may convince us that this theory is also wrong. If this theory is absolutely right, then the sense-experience of every person must be same. For example the sense-experience one gets when he sees an object, or hears a sound or tastes food or feels pain must be the same. But this is not so, for there are individual differences in the experience of these matters. A man suffering from cold, experiences the taste of his food differently from those who are not affected by it. Again, the same sound, or sight or pain is experienced differently by each person. So also, the same object which is heat to one person becomes cold to another. So, does the taste or sound or colour or touch exist in the objects outside or does it exist in our sensation? It is difficult to determine where exactly it lies. We cannot say that the truth of the existence of an object lies independent of our sense-experiences. So the theory of the realist is equally not convincing as subjectivism. In all our sense-experience, we add something more, namely, our ideas and feelings to the real objects in the outside world. In other words, our senses do not convey to us the true and exact nature of the objects in the external world without their adding the impression of themselves and the mind on the objects. In short, there exists something, some unknown invisible force between our mind and the external world, between ourselves and truth which always baffles us. As a result, we are not able to experience the true nature of the object in the outside but get only a distorted or false one. Consequently, we are not able to experience the truth as it is. So, perhaps, truth may lie beyond our senses, mind and intellect. But as far as our practical purposes are concerned, we can safely say that the test of truth is its practical validity, that is, whether our conception of truth corresponds to our practical application of it. In this connection the conception of truth according to Advaita Vedanta, is worth considering.

According to Advaita Vedanta, Truth is that which is not contradicted by past, present and future. In other words, the test of truth consists in its not being contradicted by past, present or future. There are three kinds of truth (sattā traya) or rather, three levels or degrees of truth according to Advaita. The lowest of these truths is known as Prātibhāsika. The validity of this truth exists for a few seconds and soon it is contradicted, for example, the rope-serpent illusion. In the rope-serpent illusion, we mistake rope for serpent for a few seconds. After a moment of reflection, we recognise that what we thought as snake was not a snake at all but only a rope

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and thereby contradict our previous notion that it was a snake. Here, though we rectify our error after a moment of reflection, we actually see the snake in the rope for a few seconds. For the man who mistakes the rope for the snake, this seeing of snake in the rope is as true as anything else, until he recognises that what he saw was only a rope. This perception of snake in the rope until he rectifies his erroneous notion is known as Pratibhasika satta. Still higher, there is another kind of truth which is known as Vyavahārika sattā. Our belief in the reality of the external world is of this kind. We believe that this external world of name and form has got a real existence. But according to Advaita Vedanta, our world of name and form has got only a relative reality. In other words, our world is not real from the ultimate point of view. Indeed, the world is as real to us as anything else so long as we are in the delusion of Maya. But, when once we go beyond the sphere of Maya and identify our individual soul with the Universal soul, this world of name and form will be unreal. But here too this world is unreal to a man who is liberated (jivanmukta as he is called) not in the sense that it does not exist or is an illusion, but in the sense that it is not real from the ultimate standpoint of Brahman. The world is not unreal like the skyflower for it is experienced, nor is it an illusion like the rope-serpent illusion, for its reality is not questioned so long as we are caught in the delusion of Maya but at the same time it is not ultimately real, as Brahman, for its reality is negated when the wisdom of Brahman dawns in one's self. So, the reality of the world, the Vyavaharika satta is in between Pratibhasika satta and Paramarthika satta of a Jivanmukta. The general notion, that according to Sankara's Advaita the world is an illusion or rather it does not exist, is mainly due to the misunderstanding and partial and prejudiced knowledge of Sankara's Advaita Vedanta. The last and the ultimate state of truth is the Paramarthika satta in which the whole plurality of the universe dissolves into one unity known as Brahman or Atman. This state, which is the highest and final, is the supreme aim and culmination of all spiritual discipline. In this state, everything is seen as a manifestation of Brahman. To a spiritual aspirant, who has attained this state, world is unreal from the standpoint of Brahman and that he sees world only as a manifestation of Brahman. Here there is no duality but only one without a second. Here, the senses, mind and even the intellect do not function because where they function there thought comes into being, and where thought exists there will be subject and object which means duality and so they cannot be there. Strictly speaking, it is not right to say that one attains that state, for, when this supreme wisdom of Brahman dawns in one's self he only discovers the original true nature of the self and automatically becomes Brahman as the Upanishad says 'Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati' (meaning, one who gets the wisdom of Brahman becomes Brahman itself). Here there is only an experience of the wisdom of Brahman (Brahmanubhava or Brahmajnana). In this highest state of one's spiritual quest, one experiences everything as the embodiment of truth and bliss. Here the man sheds his individuality and merges into the universal soul of Brahman. Therefore, to experience truth completely one must become truth itself. Let us now consider the nature of truth in Philosophy, religion, art and science.

Philosophy, to define broadly is an enquiry into the nature of the ultimate reality of the Universe as well as of man as a whole and of their relation, and the purpose to which they are destined. Unlike, in the West, where Philosophy is only an intellectual view of life in relation to the Universe, in India it is not only a spiritual realisation but also a way of life as well. In India, Philosophy is a direct experience (Anubhava) or rather, direct vision (Darsana) of the ultimate reality in one's own self (Atman). It is more essentially an inward search going far deep behind the mind and intellect than an outward view of the senses and mind. It is a quest after the self (Atman) for finding and realising its

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true nature removing its ignorance. Its supreme aim is to experience the ultimate truth as it is which is considered as Salvation or Moksha. Every system of Philosophy has its aim on truth. But the difference among them is only in their approach to the goal. While, according to Advaita, Jnana (wisdom) alone will help one to attain Moksha in the end of spiritual discipline, Visistādvaita believes that Bhakti (devotion) alone in the end, will help one to attain Moksha. But when one attains Moksha or experiences the truth as it is in one's self, whether he is a Visistadvaitin or an Advaitin, it is all the same. In other words, the difference among these schools is only in their means to the goal, and when the goal is attained, the same truth is experienced by all. But there are some differences between them in the conception of Moksha. Though the truth is one and the same each system of Philosophy has a different conception of it in accordance with its view and ideal. According to Advaita Vedanta liberation is attained when one completely identifies oneself with the sole truth of universal soul Brahman or strictly speaking, when the individual soul (Atman) rediscovers its true and original nature and becomes Brahman. Here the identification of the individual soul with the Universal soul Brahman is complete. According to the interpretation of *Tat tvam asi,* in Visistadvaita also, Moksha consists in the identification of the individual soul (jiva) with the Supreme Lord Narayana. But here, the whole individual soul (jiva) is not identified with the supreme. According to Visistadvaita, every soul is potentially divine and Moksha is only the identification of this divinity resident in every soul (jiva) (antaryamin as it is called) with the Supreme Lord Narayana. Therefore in Visistadvaita, only the divine element resident in each soul is identified with the Supreme and not the whole soul. According to Nyaya-Vaisesika, Moksha or liberation consists in removing the impurities of the self (atman) like hatred, narrow love, egoism (ahamkara) and selfishness etc., and of the delusion of mistaking body, mind, senses and buddhi for Atman, and the non-essential feature of the self like empirical knowledge, pain and pleasure for its essential feature. So Moksha or liberation is only negative, namely, of removing of pain and not a positive one of attaining pleasure. Thus according to Nyaya-Vaisesika, Moksha is to experience the true and original nature of the self. According to Sankhya-yoga, Moksha (liberation) consists in liberating Purusha from the clutches of Prakriti which binds it. In the final state of spiritual discipline namely Asamprajnata-Samadhi when buddhi (intellect) is concentrated on the self, buddhi disappears once for all leaving the self apart and alone. So in Sankhya-yoga also, Moksha is the experience of the true and original nature of the self removing its unessential features of its connections with Prakriti. Thus, truth is like the Sun which when reflected in various reflecting media will appear to have a number of suns with different degrees of clarity though really there is one sun without a second.

Like Philosophy, religion has also got the supreme function of kindling our spirit by enabling us to make contact with the divine through prayer. Though religion is generally considered as the sense of faith in some supernatural powers or being, in India, it is essentially a search for the ultimate reality. It is more a direct experience (anubhava) of the supreme divine than a mere intellectual faith or belief in some supreme being. It influences our thoughts and actions, nay, our whole life. It is not merely a view of God only, but a way of life as well. The essence of religion is prayer. It is through prayer that we make communion with the Supreme. As in Philosophy, so in religion, when we make contact with the divine through prayer we get immersed in that divine power and become one with the Supreme Truth. In that moment of ecstasy we experience nothing but God everywhere as the embodiment of truth and bliss.

Like Philosophy and religion, art has also got the supreme function of rousing our spirit

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by transcending our ordinary experience. Artistic experience is unique and ineffable. The essence of all art is to find beauty in things or in ideas which the artist has in his mind. Artistic experience lifts us to a new world of beauty and bliss where we shed our narrow selfishness and merge into that true eternal universal spirit. Its function is more to kindle our sense of the beautiful, than to entertain. It is said that art is meant to lead us to the silent but delightful ecstasy of spiritual realisation of Ananda. This delight is similar to the blissful experience or Satchitananda experienced (enjoyed) by saints and sages when they realise their self by concentration and meditation. As in the Moksha, so also in artistic experience, we catch a glimpse of the truth moulded in beauty and bliss. But the difference between artistic experience and Moksha is, that, the former is temporary for when we cease to experience it we come back to our own ordinary individualised world whereas, the latter is a permanent state where we stick on for ever. Again, in the enjoyment of aesthetic experience, we are being thrilled, and in its ecstasy we sometimes weep or feel joy or our hearts overflow with love or kindness or pity. But in Moksha it is said, that we are not affected by such emotions but will have only a state of blissful experience.

Another difference between the Artistic experience and Moksha is that in the former the element of appreciation by others is greater than in the latter. Whereas Moksha is attained mainly as a result of one's wisdom, art-realisation is possible as a result of one's inborn love for beauty. Therefore, in art appreciation, as in Moksha, we identify ourselves with the truth, forget our narrow sense of individuality and catch a glimpse of the truth harmoniously blended in beauty and bliss.

Like Philosophy, religion and art, science is also a quest after truth. Unlike, Philosophy, religion and art, science is mainly concerned with matter. Science analyses the various properties of matter, and says what it is. Its aim is to analyse every particle of matter in relation to its composition and to detect its true nature. Its function is to find the real and correct characteristics of a particular kind of matter as it is. It is not concerned with value or purpose of a thing nor does it consider the relation of a particular thing to man. Its sole function is to find fact as it is, irrespective of its value or relation to man. Therefore as in Philosophy, so also in science, there is this quest after truth. In fact science is concerned with and also a search for truth. But the difference between science and Philosophy in their search for truth is that in the former it is essentially a search for truth in matter and mainly matter alone whereas in the latter it includes both. Whereas Science analyses the whole by dividing it into parts and examines these parts in detail, Philosophy harmoniously unifies the various parts into a whole. While the method of Science is analytic, the method of Philosophy is synthetic. The scientist also, like the Philosopher, sacrifices his narrow selfishness in his quest after truth. He is lifted to a new world where he sees fact alone, fact of matter as it is and nothing else. In its ecstasy, he forgets his individual self and merges into the universality of matter where he perceives matter as the embodiment of truth.

Therefore, to understand and experience truth one must first sacrifice his narrow individual love and should merge with the Truth of the Universal Soul. In other words, he should identify his whole being with the Universal soul. But to understand and experience anything completely, one should become the thing itself which he wants to understand and experience. So to realise truth as it is, one should become truth itself. Without shedding off our hatred and narrow egoism, any quest for truth will not be successful. But to surrender our individuality, we should go behind the senses, mind and even intellect which always create individuality. In other words, to experience anything

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completely whether it be truth or beauty or bliss one should first realise one's true nature and then should identify oneself with the thing which he wants to experience fully as it is. The supreme aim of all philosophy or rather search for truth is not only to experience truth as it is, but also to perfect the individual by revealing all his true potential power so as to lead him to a harmonious and well-balanced life of happiness and peace.

चरैवेति

OBSERVE, CHOOSE, AND ADAPT

Nature has endowed us with the power of observation. Its use reveals similarities and dissimilarities. What we do with such knowledge depends upon the scale of values we accept. A peace-maker will surely stress similarities and common interests. But trouble-seekers will do just the opposite. They will employ all their ingenuity to magnify the points where the people around them differ. Diligent students, on the other hand, will use their discrimination, choose what is good, and adapt it for the benefit of themselves and others.

In religious and cultural fields there is great scope for differences in methods of approach and modes of expression. To that extent it is desirable to uphold the uniqueness of particular disciplines, schools of thought, and frameworks for conduct. But there is a limit beyond which the zeal for maintaining the superiority of one's own ideals and programmes may in practice result in the misinterpretation, ridicule, and ultimate destruction of every other approach. Such a course may appear to succeed for a time. But enforced uniformity will sooner or later give rise to a new and unexpected outburst of variety suited to altered circumstances. It is only sincere and steady introspection that can show to us whether we are within the permissible limit or are being driven beyond it by blind attachment to creeds and dogmas.

We shall now turn our attention to the characteristic features of certain cults and movements of the ancient world. The modern world may have something to learn from them.

* * * *

We have all read about the 'gay, care-free' gods who dwelt on Mount Olympus. Referring to them, Dr Harry C. Schnur writes in *Mystic Rebels* *: 'The ancient wisdom of Egypt, the Syro-Phoenician cults, the beliefs of Asia Minor, the mythology of Assyria and even the pre-Buddhistic lore of India had their part in shaping the Greek gods and their myths.' According to him, the 'lost civilisation of Crete' may have been the veritable 'crucible from which the composite ingot of Greek mythology was taken',—the ingot or the raw material that the 'philosopher-craftsmen of ancient Greece were to shape into forms of everlasting beauty.'

On one side, says the writer, were the sacred groves and, later, temples with priests, sacrifices and oracles. On the other, there gradually arose thoughtful people who understood that the various gods were merely aspects of one Supreme Being, very nearly

* Published by The Beechhurst Press, New York. The last two sections form a close summary of what Dr Harry C. Schnur has written. This instalment is meant as an introduction to the life and work of Apollonius of Tyana. He is the first of the four 'Mystic Rebels' presented by Dr Schnur.

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omnipotent and all-good. Their ideal was communion with this Being. This was to be achieved not through the familiar prayers and sacrifices but through complete purification of the body and, thereby, of the mind. And even then, they held, there was the need for some intermediary to convey the divine message to man and to put man into touch with the divine. Followers of the Orphic-Pythagorean cult regarded Apollo, 'his Father's prophet', as the mediator between God and man. 'Though divine, he too knew guilt', for he had slain the dragon, Typhon. To become cleansed of it, he had to serve king Admetus for a period of nine years! The moral is clear: 'He who is a pure and just man must undergo humiliation, pain and even martyrdom.'

* * * *

How then, could man achieve the 'imitation of Apollo',—solve the mystery of death, or transcend the apparent duality of light and darkness, 'good and evil, and the urge toward them' both in the heart of man? 'The answer was given by Pythagoras, himself an incarnation of Apollo.' 'The aim of his philosophy was to establish the oneness of man and the universe, the human and the divine spirit.' The heavenly spheres show the reign of harmony; and to grow nearer to God, man must bring about that same harmony within himself. He must secure it in the world of his thoughts as well as in the world of his relationships, domestic, social and even political. Harmony cannot coexist with the extremes of tyranny and anarchy. Democracy, thus, would form 'the middle way', or the nearest approach to the ideal of harmony. Politics, therefore, formed part of one's duty. Harmony was also to be extended to cover man's relation to the 'World-soul' embracing every sentient mind, human and animal. From this it followed that the flesh of animals was to be avoided. The senses were ordinarily fallible; and flesh-eating coarsened them further. Besides animals had souls, like human beings. Wine too was prohibited; for it deprived man of his higher faculties. Even without intoxicants, the mind was a difficult area to control because of passion and lust. The very fact of 'incarnation' in a mortal body involved a certain amount of impurity. The whole of one's life was, therefore, to be a prolonged effort to remove all sorts of impurity, bodily and mental, and to restore the soul to its pristine state. Death was only 'a change of domicile.' Pythagoreans did not fear it. Nor did they associate it with a subsequent state of heavenly enjoyment, or its opposite, cruel punishment. Purity being their motto, they wore white garments, indicative of external purity. They sought to achieve internal purity through vows of silence, strenuous study, and sublimation of the desires for wealth and carnal pleasures.

Pythagoreans had 'clubs' or orders of their own,—'aristocratic brotherhoods' that exerted great moral and political influence. Their doctrines affected not only Greece but the whole of the ancient world. 'There is no doubt,' says the writer, 'that the Jewish sect of the Essenes absorbed much Pythagorean teaching, and Essene doctrine constitutes the bulk of early Christian belief.'

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

(The Pythagorean brotherhood) formed a community, living together as a large family, taking their meals in common, wearing the same kind of dress, and applying themselves to the arts and crafts, as well as to the study of music, medicine, and particularly, mathematics. It was customary for members to pass through a novitiate, the watchword being: first to hear, then to know.

—FRANK THILLY.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Sri T. R. Raghava Sastri is Principal, Vivekananda College, Madras.

Prof. K. R. R. Sastry is a former Principal, Law College, Jaipur.

Srimati K. Kunhikavamma from Trivandrum, gives the text and translation of 'Hymn unto Vishnu', ascribed to Acharya Sankara. There are other versions available for the same.

Sri R. S. Murti is Lecturer, College of Rural Higher Education, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore.

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NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF RELIGION

Those who are interested in the cultural and religious lore of the country often stumble on the paucity of information available regarding the religious institutions in the country. Some time ago the Government of India published a book giving information regarding social service institutions in the country. But the book is incomplete. Moreover, it completely avoided denominational institutions which also conduct such services and surely more. As a result, you do not get a comprehensive picture of the particular types of services done in the land. As there is a vast number of religious institutions conducting various types of educational, cultural and social activities, it will be good to have an exhaustive book in several volumes giving the required information. Three years ago we brought out a special issue of this journal on the ancient Maths of South India. While trying to collect information, we found how little information is actually available in print. Even the particular institutions were not always able to supply the information properly. We then suggested that respective institutions should at least bring out books about themselves. Some of the institutions since then or earlier have brought out suitable books. As for places of pilgrimage some guide books are available. About Maths and Ashramas no exhaustive study is available, though here and there some collection of information has been made. The similar is the case with temples, though regarding architecture and art some study has been made. States having organized religious endowment departments ought to have some records but no planned effort, it seems, has been made to bring them out.

With this background of lack of information, we specially welcome the idea of bringing out a National Directory of prominent religious places, temples, mutts and endowments. The recently constituted Hindu Religious Endowments Commission, with Dr C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar as Chairman, has circulated a Questionnaire which includes this idea of a directory. Every one interested in religion, culture, architecture and society in general will surely wholeheartedly support the idea and expectantly wait for such a directory.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CONTACT LETTERS: Issued by Martinus Institute of Spiritual Science, opp. Scindia House, New Delhi-1, P. 323. Price not stated.

Martinus is a Dane born in 1890. When he was 31 he had a profound experience as a result of which his consciousness transmuted itself into what is here described as 'Cosmic Consciousness'. An immense vista of Knowledge was revealed to him. And after an initial period (running into seven years) of difficult adjustment to the vibrations and demands of the normal humanity he settled down to deliver the knowledge so gained, in a system of symbology worked out by him in seclusion. This Revelation is expounded in six volumes of his *Livets Bog* (Danish) i.e. Book of Life, five of which have been already published.

The present collection of Letters by an important follower of Martinus throws a good deal of light on the cosmology and philosophy of this school. While one has to go to the source books for a fuller and more satisfying account of this teaching, what we gather from these letters is interesting and even encouraging.

Briefly told: this creation is willed into life by God. He guides it towards the Goal fixed by Him. He wills to manifest his own Nature of Joy, Knowledge and Love through his creatures. Evolution is the process. Special Divine 'Cosmic Impulses' precipitate the course of manifestation into higher and higher statuses on the 'Ladder'. The present moment is one such of incalculable significance. 'A new radiant cosmic impulse is vibrating in over our world today affecting every truly spiritually developed human being' (P. 4) and man is on the threshold of a new age of the Sons of God. He realises and makes effort to develop in himself the very nature of God i.e. Love, Beauty, Joy and he shall grow into the supreme Nature of the Godhead.

Readers will be struck by many conceptions common to this thought and Theosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy etc. Reincarnation, Immortality of the Soul, the temporary—and necessary—role of Evil and Suffering in evolving Creation are accepted as self-evident truths. While these Letters are interesting and provide easy reading they are somewhat discursive; we would suggest that the authorities of this Institute bring out a short introductory book giving a synopsis of the whole teaching.

M. P. PANDIT.

BAPU AS I SAW HIM: By Ramnarayan Choudhary. Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. P. 274. Price Rs. 2.50.

Books about great men are perennial delight, and this one relating to the greatest man 'not only of his age but of all time', is no exception. The author and his wife who had been close associates of Mahatma Gandhi have recounted altogether 341 incidents and instances in his life, which are not merely interesting but show up the many facets of his amazing personality. He was verily like many of our Puranic heroes whose doings in the mundane sphere, great or small, had always embodied a lesson or a precept for mankind.

Gandhiji radiated as much magnetism at close range as from a distance. He said what he believed: he practised what he preached (P. 117); and this was explicit not merely in his political or social work but even in minutest affairs, as dietetics and house-keeping. He waved the magic wand of love and forgiveness and bagged his opponents (P. 131).

He was a stickler in personal discipline; he subordinated himself to his juniors when they were in responsible positions (P. 133).

He was flexible, except on matters of principle (P. 143). A prophet of renunciation, he insisted on the new entrants or converts adhering to their old ways, because he carefully discriminated between basic things and minor ones and did not use compulsion even with his own men (P. 147).

Gandhiji was all the time engaged in solving the complicated problems of the world: yet he found time to attend to the affairs of little children under his charge (262), the newly weds and of his co-workers. He took care to know all the relations of a worker and frequently corresponded with them (102), treating them as the members of his family. He owned an inexhaustible treasure of constructive ideas (263); and he was always experimenting and expanding his knowledge. He did not like slovenliness in dress, writing (98, 99) and was fastidious about lettering and keeping accounts.

As a journalist, he regarded himself as a 'judge dedicated to service' (141) and was a stickler to truth and accuracy. Not a word was published which was not read and passed by him.

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The book deserves to be in the hands of every one, and the ethical and moral lessons which it embodies, are a much needed corrective in the troublous and troubled times we are living in.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

Here are some more books published by the Navajivan Publications:

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 39. Price 25 nP.

TRUSTEESHIP: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 40. Price 25 nP.

INDIA'S FOOD PROBLEM: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 60. Price 40 nP.

PROHIBITION AT ANY COST: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 24. Price 20 nP.

DISCOURSES ON THE GITA: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 66. Price 50 nP.

ANECDOTES FROM BAPU'S LIFE: By Mukulbhai Kalarthi. Pp. 47. Price 40 nP.

SANSKRIT - TAMIL

SANDHYA VANDANAM: With Anushthana-prakasika by 'Anna'. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras-17. Pages 178. Price Rs. 1.50.

This is a revised edition of *Sandhyavandanam* by Sri N. Subramanya Iyer, otherwise known as 'Anna' who is so well known to the world of Religion and Philosophy as the Translator and Commentator in Tamil of such standard works as The Bhagavad Gita, The Principal Upanishads, The Devi Mahatmyam and the Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram that have been published under the auspices of The Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

The present publication is a valuable addition to the Literature on the Doctrine and Wisdom of Sandhya Worship that is enjoined on every Hindu as an indispensable daily Sadhana for the attainment of the prizes of life, here and hereafter.

As Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna used to put it in his unique expressive way, the teaching of all the Vedas and Scriptures ends in Sandhya, Sandhya ends in Gayatri and Gayatri ends in OM which takes the Sadhaka directly to the seat of the Para Brahman.

Trained and disciplined in the Ramakrishna way of life, the distinguished author has, with all the resources of his profound erudition and penetrating insight into the heart of the Scriptural teaching, presented in simple readable Tamil, a reliable text and commentary on Sandhyopasana—which is the Universal Invocation and Prayer of the Hindus, carrying around it 'a Sacred aura of immemorial tradition'—from the days of Vedic Rishis to the present generation.

The book is divided into two parts, the First Part dealing with *Arghya-Pradana* or Offering of Sacramental Waters—and the Second Part dealing with *Gayatri Japa* or Meditation on the Sacred Protective Hymn known as Gayatri which contains the quintessence of all Vedic Hymns. 'Gayatri Chhandasamaham', 'Of metres, I am Gayatri' says the Gitacharya in His Song Divine.

In preparing this edition for the benefit of the votaries of Hindu Faith, who still believe in the practice of the daily Sandhya three times a day viz., when the Sun rises in the morning, when He ascends the mid-heavens and when He sets in the evening, the learned author has kept in view the needs of the beginner who requires a good knowledge of the essentials of Varna, Swara and Matra of Vedic Sounds and also of the advanced practicant who looks behind the veil of Sounds and words for an elucidation of the spiritual values and virtues that are associated with the recitation and chanting of Sacred Mantrams.

To suit the requirements of the two classes of Sadhaks, the author has added an illuminating gloss known as *Anushthana Prakasika* which clarifies the *Prayoga Vidhi*—or the rules of procedure and also explains the *Prasada Krama* or the way of the unfolding of Spiritual Life through the conscientious practice of Faith, Devotion, Meditation and Communion which the Sandhya Discipline formulates and fosters in strict, scientific accord with the Upanishadic Teaching,—'Sraddha-bhakti-dhyana-yogadeva hi'.

Besides the text and commentary on Sandhya Worship, the author has contributed an Anubandha or a useful supplement on such special codes of spiritual discipline as *Brahma Yajna* or the Study of the Vedas and *Pranagni Hotra* of the Maintenance of the Vital Fire which help to broaden and strengthen the basis of spiritual life and gradually to build up a regular circuit for the coursing of scriptural energy at all points of the system.

It is the publishers' intention to offer this book as a constant companion to every novice who is being initiated into Vedic Knowledge and the price of the book has been accordingly fixed low enough at Rs. 1.50 a copy; a prize edition at Rs. 3/- a copy is also available for purposes of presentation to initiates. And Messrs. Ganesh

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& Company, Madras, have done a real service by thus pooling together the treasures of Vedic learning and Knowledge in a single handy volume and presenting them in such excellent form and get-up for the benefit of the reading public who would care to translate the teaching of the Scriptures into daily practice.

K. PANCHAPAGESAN.

PERIODICAL

THE CALL DIVINE: Bhagavan's Jayanti Souvenir Vol. VIII. No. 5. Pp. 356. Published by The Call Divine, 1/8, Bhuta Nivas, Vincent Road, Matunga, Bombay-16.

This meritorious publication is not a mere souvenir, as souvenirs go, but is a lasting contribution to the study of Bhagavan Ramana, his teachings and of his spiritual illumination and insight. The contributors are drawn from some of the well-known philosophers and writers. The essays are so arranged as to present a clear and cogent conspectus of the great teacher, who during his life time had influenced the thoughtful aspirants in his own country as well as in foreign lands without himself stirring out of his chosen abode for upwards of fifty years (P. 232). This was a unique instance in history; and incidents like those mentioned on p. 234 to 238 proved that people living in far off countries, 'who never knew him in the flesh, have had experiences of his actual presence, aye, even of his touch, ready with his Grace to help.'

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

REPORT FOR 1959

1. *Sunday Services.* Swami Satprakashananda, who is in charge of the Centre, spoke on different religious and philosophical topics in the Society's chapel on Sunday mornings. Among others, groups of members and students from ten different churches, schools, and colleges attended the services. Total number of Sunday lectures was forty-six.

2. *Meditation and Discourse.* On Tuesday evenings the Swami conducted a meditation and gave a discourse on the Upanishad and the Bhagavatam. Students and members of different churches and educational centres also attended the meetings. The Swami answered questions after the discourse. Number of Tuesday meetings was forty-three.

3. *Occasional Lectures and Discussions.* The Swami was invited to speak on Hindu religion and philosophy by different denominational churches: (1) Grace Methodist Church of St. Louis, (2) the Evangelical and Reformed Church of Kirkwood, (3) the Kirkwood Methodist Church, (4) the Hebrew Temple Emanuel. He also spoke on Hindu Religion at a public meeting sponsored by the Baha's of St. Louis and Webster Groves. A discussion followed these talks and the Swami answered questions.

4. *Additional Meetings at the Society* were held for discussion on Hindu religion and philosophy for the Kirkwood High School Senior students of the World History Class and for the members of the United Campus Christian Fellowship of Washington University. The Swami expounded the Hindu views and answered questions.

5. *Anniversaries.* To celebrate the birthdays of Sri Krishna, Buddha, Sankara, Sri Ramakrishna, The Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and such religious festivals as Good Friday, the worship of the Divine Mother, Durga, and Christmas Eve, special meditation, devotional worship, and services for the public were conducted. A Hindu dinner was served on Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. Light food was served on other occasions.

6. *The Swami's Trip to Southern California.* The Swami went to Los Angeles in the beginning of August and stayed with Swami Prabhavananda about a month. He was the guest speaker at the Vedanta Temple in Los Angeles and spoke on 'The Hindu View of Life.' At the Vedanta Temple at Santa Barbara he participated with Swami Prabhavananda and six other Swamis in a religious ceremony for the initiation of five Brahmacharinis of the Sarada Math (Convent) into the monastic life. Following this three probationers of the Convent were initiated into Brahmacharyya. On the next Sunday (August 30) the Swamis spoke to an audience of about four hundred on different phases of Hindu religion and philosophy.

7. *The Swami's Visit to Kansas City.* On his way back from Los Angeles he stopped in Kan-

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sas City for two days as the guest of the Vedanta group there. He spoke on Hindu religion at a public meeting which was attended by more than one hundred persons. Several written questions were answered by him from the platform. The Swami was also entertained with dinners and luncheons. A number of persons came for interviews.

8. *The Swami's Trip to Northern California.* The special purpose of the trip was to attend the dedication ceremony of the new Vedanta Temple in San Francisco from October 7 to 11. During the first four days there was elaborate ritualistic worship in the temple, in which Swami Ashokananda, his two assistant Swamis, and five guest Swamis, including our Swami, participated. Every morning and evening about four hundred devotees, some sixty of whom (including three from our Society) came from different Vedanta Centres, devoutly observed for hours the performance of the worship and listened with rapt attention to the melodious Sanskrit chants by the Swamis. On the following Sunday morning, October 11, a public meeting was held. Swami Ashokananda declared the temple open to all worshippers of God and to all seekers of truth and introduced the visiting Swamis to the audience. Seven Swamis spoke on different aspects of Vedanta. Swami Satprakashananda spoke on 'The Fundamental Principles of Vedanta.' The attendance numbered about four hundred.

Next day before day-break eight probationers of the Vedanta monastery of San Francisco were initiated into Brahmacharyya by Swami Ashokananda in the presence of the other Swamis. In the afternoon the guest Swamis visited the Vedanta temple in Berkeley and had their dinner there. In the evening they addressed a well attended public meeting in the chapel. Our Swami spoke on 'The Universality of Vedanta.'

9. *Meetings During the Swami's Absence.* During the Swami's absence in California the Vedanta group in St. Louis met regularly every Sunday morning and Tuesday evening in the chapel for prayer and meditation. They also listened to the Swami's recorded lectures.

10. *Out-of-town Guests and Visitors.* About forty-five guests and visitors from many different places visited the Vedanta Society. Most of them interviewed the Swami and attended the services. They came to St. Louis specially for this purpose.

11. *Interviews.* The Swami gave more than one hundred interviews. Most of the interviewers came to him for spiritual guidance and for discussion of their personal problems.

12. *Library.* The lending library was well utilized by the members and friends of the Society.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

REPORT FOR 1957 & 1958

The above centre runs a Boys' Home, Library and Reading Room and 2 Tamil Schools. The Library contains over 4,191 books in different languages. 50 boys are being fully supported and looked after at the Boys' Home. The Vivekananda Tamil School had 130 students on its roll with 5 teachers. The Sarada Devi Tamil School had 160 girls on its roll with 6 lady teachers. Night School for Adults conducts 3 classes with an enrolment of 70 under the supervision of 3 teachers. Religious classes were conducted weekly. Birthday Celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Krishna were observed with special programme of Puja, lectures and music. While thanking the donors, contributors, devotees and well-wishers the management appeal for funds to meet the deficit in the General Fund and the Boys' Home Maintenance Fund.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT FOR 1959

Started in 1922 the Mission is rendering service in medical, religious, educational and cultural fields. The Homeopathic Dispensary treated 71,887 patients and the Allopathic Department 48,464 during the year. The Adbhutananda Upper Primary School had 189 boys on the roll. There were 26 students in the Students' Home. A spacious two-storied building for accommodating 30 students was built in 1959. The Mission runs a Library (with a reading room and lecture hall). It issued 8,606 books during the year. Religious and cultural activities consisted of scriptural classes, lectures, worship and celebration of birthdays. The total receipts in all departments amounted to Rs. 1,71,473.39 and the total expenditure was Rs. 1,38,432.41. The management thank the subscribers, donors and friends for their kind support.

The birthday of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji falls on Thursday, 21st July.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII AUGUST 1960 No. 4

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna to Pratap: "Let me tell you something. You are a learned, intelligent and serious-minded soul. You have had enough of lectures and discussions. Now gather your whole mind and direct it to God. (With a smile) No doubt you say now that you are doing all this to keep Keshab's name alive; but in a few days you won't feel that way. Listen to a story. A man had built a house on a hill. It was only a mud hut; but he had built it with great labour. A few days later there came a violent storm and the hut began to rock. The man became very anxious and prayed: 'Oh God of winds, please don't wreck the house!' But the wind-god paid no heed to his prayer. The house was about to crash. Then he thought of a trick. He remembered that Hanuman was the son of the wind-god. At once he cried out with great earnestness: 'Oh revered sir, please don't pull down the house! It belongs to Hanuman. I beseech you to protect it.' But still the house continued to shake violently. Nobody seemed to listen to his prayer. Many times he repeated, 'Oh this house belongs to Hanuman!' But the fury of the wind did not abate. Then he remembered that Hanuman was the devoted servant of Rama whose younger brother was Lakshmana. Desperately the man prayed, crying aloud: 'Oh, this house belongs to Lakshmana!' But that also failed to help matters. As the last resort the man cried out: 'This is Rama's house! Don't break it down, oh God of winds!' But this too proved futile, and the house began to crash down. Whereupon the man rushed out of it with a curse: 'Let it go! This is the devil's own hut!'

"You don't have to perpetuate Keshab's name. Remember that he achieved all his success through the will of God. Through divine will his work was established, and through divine will it is disintegrating. What can you do about it? Now it is your bounden duty to give your entire mind to God, to plunge deep into the Ocean of His Love."

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SOCIAL REFORM AND THE RAMAKRISHNA MOVEMENT

Social rules are created with the necessity of time. As the latter changes a shift in the outlook also results. The change of outlook in turn is followed by social change. There are physical, biological, technological and cultural factors that influence the social change. Much depends on the scheme of values already operating in the particular social situation. When the change is consciously done or attempted, it may be said to be coming strictly under social reform. When we study the history of different societies, we realize the fact that greatest changes came through new discoveries and inventions requiring the complete overhauling of the life-pattern. Thus the nomadic men settled down as the agricultural communities which earlier were more or less exclusive. With the coming in of easy communication and growth of industry, the pattern of life had undergone again a major change. The Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, is the one single factor having the greatest impact on human society.

Though the above is quite true, we must not ignore the fact that changes, though not of the same magnitude, were taking place right down from the beginning of human history. They were more or less dependent upon the changes of pattern of life. With the coming in of higher religions, there was a conscious effort to make the higher ideals real in life. The later ethicists, humanists and political philosophers are all in the line of the higher religions. Mostly their inspiration was even consciously religious.

So social reform in some form or other is seen from the dawn of written history. Our life is such that it depends on exploitation of some kind or other. When it is too much, it may be called an oppression which in its turn produces discontent. In two ways oppression can be minimized or eliminated. Either the oppressed join together and demand a change or a group of sympathetic, thinking people from the privileged group try to remedy the evils. These efforts may be designated as social reform dealing not so much with economic affairs as with other social injustices or inequalities. Religious teachers down the ages had the vision of equality of man and out of their overflowing sympathy for the weaker sections they exhorted their followers to render service to them and to abolish the inequality. Taking the clue from them many other thinkers too worked for it and dreamt about ideal social condition in Utopias, Ramarajyas and the like. Various communities were established for a common life of equality and social justice. The world probably, is not yet ready for complete equality. Hence in spite of their efforts, social evils persist. When a particular evil is too nauseating, effort is made to remedy it.

Social reform primarily deals with correcting the defects or injustices done to the weaker sections of the community. In the Indian context, the caste system draws the immediate attention of the critics. Improving women's rights and privileges is another important item. This along with economic betterment are the world problems. Caste in different forms, i.e. prejudices against other sections of the community also may be said to be the common problem for the social reformers throughout the world. In the western countries the reform movements are striving more or less towards parliamentary electoral reform.

It is often contended that the persistent injustice is often traced to the tradition or scriptures. In the Indian

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situation, there was practically less difficulty on this score though the caste has been often supported with scriptural quotations. But all the religio-philosophical systems stood for the equality of all human beings for reaching the highest goal of life. Vedanta speaks of the divinity of human souls and if equality was not possible in the mundane sphere, it stressed on its workability in the spiritual realm. This idea of the divinity of man removes all barriers of man for his progress. Swami Vivekananda loudly proclaimed this divinity of man with all its implications and claimed equal treatment for all. Because the Vedantic ideas dominate the Indian consciousness, no difficulty was felt in India after freedom to give franchise to women and the socially backward people, sometimes with special advantages. Overnight, governors, ministers and other top ranking administrators could be selected from them without any opposition.

The modern economic forces are a great leveller. It is said that the feudal order was completely changed by the Industrial Revolution, the transition being through commercial revolution. But the European mind was prepared for total changes through the development of the idea of brotherhood, rationalism and writings of the precursors of the French Revolution. Industrialism has broken down the communal and national isolation and brought about the world relationship. Religious, political and social philosophers are preparing the mind of man for complete acceptance of this new relationship.

Though it is the time and social and economic situation that are mainly responsible for vast social changes, the spearheads for these changes are great men and movements who bring about reforms in smaller or larger scales. In that context only we can discuss about the services rendered by the Ramakrishna Movement in the reformation of society in modern India.

Social reform has three factors. First, preparing the proper mood for it. Secondly, to give a programme for reform and thirdly, creating institutions to carry out that programme. In the first, the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda had the greatest effect. In the giving of a programme, their Movement did not go straight to the reforms. The stress was more on education — education of women and the masses. Asked once what he thought of widow-re-marriage, Swami Vivekananda retorted: 'Am I a widow to decide whether a husband is necessary? Give them education and let them decide for themselves.' He gave still more stress on the education of the masses and was anxious for their material improvement. The study of Hindu social structure down the ages shows it clearly that material prosperity, education and culture are the three factors that bring a group to a higher ladder. He thought that it was better for reformers not to waste their energy on attacking the social evils which he thought originated through social ill-health which in turn must be cured through education and material amenities. He encouraged the educated upper classes to go to the service of the suffering millions, the Daridra-Narayanas, with the idea of Divine worship. This idea had taken deep root in the Indian consciousness and Mahatma Gandhi popularized it further through his efforts for Harijan upliftment.

But it must not be forgotten that the nature of society is such that it cannot be fully dictated. The most that reformers can do is to supply the leaven of culture and atmosphere. This the Ramakrishna and other movements did. The actual changes that we see now-a-days

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cannot be said to be the direct result of any one man or movement. The changes have come through forces which cannot be fully calculated or determined. Economic changes, easy communication, growth of industry and city, western education and ideas and lastly the national movements under Gandhiji, and economic causes after war, independence and partition are the direct causes that actually have hammered all the opposition and brought about the changes that were undreamt of in the preceding years. All these changes cannot be said to be for good, but desirable changes also have taken place. The function of the religious teachers and idealists is to prepare the common mind for changes for the better as also to impress on the rulers the necessity of bringing in the desirable changes. The idealistic writers and preachers try through preaching and propaganda to prepare the people for the impending changes.

What exactly is the contribution of the Ramakrishna Movement in the social reform of the country? Before trying to find out the exact services by the movement, over and above the supplying of ideas and enthusiasm for reform, let us see what the other socio-religious movements of the last century tried to achieve. That will give an idea of the concurring and distinctive services of the Ramakrishna Movement.

The Brahmo Samaj was more of a social reform movement. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, through his personal effort as well as through the Samaj, tried to bring about some reforms. Of these the abolition of Suttee is well known. Efforts for widow-re-marriage, stopping of polygamy, and abolition of caste through inter-caste-marriage and giving up of sacred thread, also must be taken into account. Of course, these are not things that could be introduced in full through legal measures. But they did create a questioning and a mood to change among the educated elite, though in reality, very few of them actually accepted them in their own life. Some of the Brahmo leaders were the first to go to foreign countries which was a taboo in those days. The Brahmo Samaj along with preaching of harmony of scriptures, reason and faith, and monism and social reforms, advocated universal brotherhood.

The Prarthana Samaj also stood for abolition of caste and child-marriage, advocated inter-dining, inter-marriage, widow re-marriage and equal status for women.

The Arya Samaj too advocated some reforms. It advocated going back to the Vedic age of simplicity and casteless-ness. It introduced a spirit of social service and was preoccupied with social reclamation through Suddhi, Sanghatan and education.

The Theosophical Society, being an international organisation, did away with the caste within the group, spoke about universal brotherhood and gave a fillip to the study of comparative religion and occultism.

Needless to say, all these movements remained confined to the elite and followers of the particular groups. They could not touch the vast Hindu society. But surely, all these movements removed all opposition to these reforms from the mind of the educated. Whole-hearted acceptance however did not result.

The Ramakrishna Movement came on the scene at that time, almost by the end of the 19th century. Its stress on the spiritual essentials without disturbing too much the ritualistic forms gave it a unique status. It did not attack too directly any of the accretions which were created due to exigencies of time and only mildly pointed out that society could change without requiring any

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change of religion. This suggestion was more acceptable to the people of the land who sweared by their religion and were afraid that reformers would kill their religion too. It is in this field of preparing the Hindu mind that the Ramakrishna Movement had the greatest contribution to make. Ideas of reform by members from within the community become more appealing and forceful. The followers of Sri Ramakrishna remained fullfledged members of the Hindu community and thereby were heard with more sympathy and less opposition. As the Movement did not secede from the body politic and form a separate sect, changes in the lives of its followers brought about changes in the larger society. To achieve greater success in reform without much opposition, it is necessary to build on the past without attempting to demolish the superstructure. This method of work was followed by this Movement. As a result, its ideas permeated the society and unobtrusively liberalized it to a large extent. Through its religio-social institutions it preached these ideas and effected some changes, for a world outlook was at the back of all its activities. Many other people and groups followed this idea and helped in the social reforms.

Any movement to be effective must create institutions of social service. The reforms are brought about through the pattern of life in these institutions. An account of the institutions created and run by the Ramakrishna Math and Mission may be given here. There are altogether 138 centres of which 72 are mission centres and 66 math centres. Of these 86 are in India. There are also over 20 sub-centres in India and abroad. The Mission does the temporary relief works in different parts of India faced with flood, fire, refugee, epidemic, earthquake and other problems. In the medical field there are 12 indoor hospitals and 60 outdoor dispensaries. In the educational field there are 53 students' homes, 3 colleges, 2 teachers' training colleges, 3 engineering schools, 1 agricultural school, 1 rural institute, 2 social education organiser's training centres, 35 high schools, 127 lower grade schools, 1 institution for training auxiliary nurses and midwives. The number of students in all the institutions taken together are nearly 54 thousand, a third of them being girls. Spiritual and cultural work done is in the form of regular classes and occasional lectures, libraries and reading rooms in most centres. Ten principal publication centres with 5 magazines in English and 5 in the Indian languages are also bringing out numerous books in different languages to popularize the ideas. Over and above these there are almost an equal number of unofficial centres bearing the names of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and the Holy Mother, carrying out similar work for the benefit of the society.

Thus it will be seen that in the field of social service the Ramakrishna institutions working without any extraneous consideration had something to offer. The greatest service for social reform was however in the field of ideas. The teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda stressed on the spiritual values and tried to purify the social life and create abundant sympathy for suffering sections of the society and generated enthusiasm for the amelioration of social injustices. Their teachings are general and universal and not directed particularly to some social evils and so have the potency to render the same services for generations to come. Time cannot limit the value of the eternal verities they spoke of and the implications of their realization of the divinity of man and equality of life will surely guide the society through the corridors of time.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE MODERN AGE

U. N. CHATTERJEE

From times immemorial India has been a country which has consistently produced a succession of sages and thinkers who have attained topmost positions in their special fields. Most of these men have initiated separate religious movements, or organised schools of new philosophical thought. These persons, great as they were, drew talented men around them, trained them as their disciples through elaborate schooling, and they, in their turn, carried the gospel of new religious creeds or thought movements through the aisles of time.

With Ramakrishna, however, the case was entirely different. Here was a man born in an obscure village, Kamarpukur, in Bengal of humble parents and in humbler situations. As a growing lad he migrated to Calcutta with his elder brother, where he had set up a small school for imparting instructions in scriptures and in Sanskrit language and literature. The brother changed this position to accept priesthood in the new temple erected at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta, by Rani Rasmani and dedicated to the goddess Kali. Ramakrishna followed his brother there, and lived there almost till the end of his life. All his religious experiences were realised at this place; all his teachings were imparted in this temple dwelling. Such in brief is the life of Ramakrishna.

It will be seen that he had little or no formal schooling; he did not undertake any educational course as is ordinarily available to children drawn from the same social status in which Ramakrishna was born and in which he grew up. Indeed he was himself averse to any formal educational discipline. He said that he was opposed to any variety of educational training the chief aim of which was to advance material prosperity.

Ramakrishna was therefore almost an illiterate man; he denied himself the opportunity of reading various standard treatises to learn the thought content of different systems of Indian philosophy, or of different religious scriptures. He did not initiate any altogether new religious movement, or enunciate any new philosophical code. And yet the teachings of this simple, illiterate person has far-reaching influence on men and society, not only in India but even in countries far beyond its borders. Learned men, men with talent and initiative, men gifted with forces of personality and intellect, gathered round him seeking his blessings and guidance. The question naturally arises — What is the reason behind this apparent contradiction? What led gifted and sophisticated men to be drawn to him?

In order to answer these questions it would be necessary to subject the personality of Ramakrishna, and the times in which he lived, to a somewhat detailed examination.

He was born in the year 1836. This means that he was born at a time of great political and social upheaval. Power, political power, had definitely passed from the Indian to foreign hands. The British power had been more or less consolidated in the greater part of India, and, during the stewardship of the Indian administration by the erstwhile Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, there was a respite from major military operations. And he, therefore, had time to enunciate a liberal and humanising policy. Social reform was initiated by the abolition of *suttee*, and it was decided that the funds granted by Government would, as demanded earlier by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, be devoted to the instruction of Indians in English language and literature, and Western science and thought. It was, therefore, an age in which the impact of thought and culture of the West on those of India was being increasingly felt. The arrival of Christian religious missions as a distinct ennobling

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and liberalising force, which compelled recognition, was also the direct result of the advent of the British or Christian power in India. As a result of all these forces, stresses were generated in the political and social fields, which sought to give a new shape to Indian thought and social structure. There was a tendency to break away from orthodoxy or traditional patterns of thinking and behaviour. Ramakrishna was born during this time, and grew up in an environment which was conditioned by an increasing degree of intermixture of various thought processes and cultural trends. The result was on the whole a liberalising and softening of hardened, archaic social practices and attitudes.

There was a new orientation of human values and revolt against the traditional acceptance of socio-religious authority. It was, therefore, natural that the personality of Ramakrishna should be moulded, to a considerable extent, by the dynamism of the times. Time and again we see in Ramakrishna's life, the manifestation of the signs of this revolt and break away from tradition. For example, early in his life when he was initiated into Brahmanism, after appropriate religious rituals, he gave the first preference to a low-born woman for the acceptance of alms much against the protestation of his elders. This was against the prevailing practice; the alms should have been accepted only from a Brahman. But to Ramakrishna tradition devoid of human values had no meaning. This woman had nursed him when he was born, and Ramakrishna felt convinced that she had pure and motherly affection for him, and therefore no body could resist him from defying the prevailing regulations of an orthodox society, and behaving in the way he did. There are other examples. But the most glaring one centres round his chief disciple and torch bearer, the great Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda was born of non-Brahmin parents. Yet Ramakrishna did not hesitate to accept him as his disciple, to place him first among his followers, and chose him to lead them after his demise. Another example will show how he disregarded social position and prestige of a person as an index of his acceptability to him. He accepted Latu Maharaj, later known as Swami Adbhutananda, as his disciple. Latu Maharaj came from people who were graziers by profession, and occupied the position of a domestic servant in one of his devotee's household when he came in contact with Ramakrishna. This depicts Ramakrishna as a man with wide sympathies and with an uncommon gift of appreciation of human dignity. He drew his disciples from a wide cross-section of the social structure prevalent in his time. The tests he prescribed were sincerity, devotion and purity of thought and action.

The present age is characterised by women asserting their rights as human beings, and claiming equality with men in all spheres of life, social, political and economic. This awakening of women was beginning to be felt in this country, in a somewhat feeble manner, towards the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Ramakrishna clearly read the signs of the times. He not only had many women devotees, he had a number of women disciples whom he trained so that they could attain the highest spiritual realisation. Not only that; Ramakrishna himself chose to take instructions and undergo a course of rigorous religious discipline from a lady of unusual and rare spiritual experience, Bhairavi Brahmani. And he paid the highest tribute to women when he equated his consort with the Divine Mother, and worshipped her and offered floral tributes at her feet as an act of devotional homage. Later on his followers, no doubt taking a cue from him, made women disciples an integral part of the Ramakrishna Order of Monks, naming it after the Holy Mother. This recognition of women as an equal counterpart of men by Ramakrishna, and his acceptance of them as disciples are indeed a novel feature in India's socio-religious set-up. In this country, with the questionable exception of Buddha, no noteworthy religious leader ever accepted or admitted women into his fold. The great Sankara created a tight organisation of monks in this country by establishing four *maths*, one

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each at one of the four cardinal extremities, namely at Shringeri, Dwarka, Puri and Badrikashram. But nowhere in his scheme did women find a place.

A phenomenal increase in population and shortage of food is a persistent feature of the present age. The world is going hungry in many regions. This is specially so in the case of India. In most families children are ill-fed and undernourished. Ramakrishna was distressed at the sight of starved children, and households plagued by poverty. He therefore lost no opportunity of impressing on his householder devotees the advisability of limiting the number of children. Said he, after one or two children have been born, the husband and wife should live like brothers and sisters. Thus he realised the desirability of population control at a time when no one thought of this problem. The suggestion for a programme of population control is being stressed now, perhaps too late in the day. Ramakrishna was thus far ahead of his time in this particular field.

Ramakrishna was particularly conscious of the complications of modern life, and the exacting demands of the present age. He therefore ensured that his instructions relating to religious practices were such that they could easily be adapted to the modern conditions of life and living. He was aware that the span of life was short, and that much of a man's time each day was spent in acquiring the wherewithals of life. The man was no longer a human unit commanding a tranquil life with a considerable amount of leisure at his disposal. In the quickened tempo of life, where was the time for long periods devoted to meditation and spiritual pursuits? He therefore very often opined that the present was not the time for elaborate rituals and religious practices; only devotion and *nama-japa* for a limited interval of time was enough to attain spiritual experience. When one devotee protested that he could not spare even this much time, he instructed him to think of his *istha*, personal God, during the time he spent in smoking.

Then again modern age has been thoroughly usurped by commerce. Man's thought-habit and character have been moulded by commercial outlook and values. The everyday dealings between one man and another, ordinary social intercourse, are now evaluated in terms of buying and selling. The technique of shop-keeping has invaded even the domain of domestic sanctity. In such an age as this, one must be particularly careful about his dealings with others, in his procurement of the ordinary necessities of life so that he may not be tricked or defrauded. Ramakrishna did not sit in an ivory tower far removed and isolated from the general parade of life. He knew all aspects of the difficulties and travails of the present day human beings. Indeed his awareness of the social conditions of his time was far keener than that of many hard-boiled householders. Once one of his devotees had to buy a piece of household utensil. He purchased one, but did not care to examine the soundness of the article delivered to him by the shop-keeper. Afterwards, on reaching home, the article was examined and found to be defective. Hearing this episode, Ramakrishna took the devotee to task for his carelessness. He said that the shop-keeper had entered business not to indulge in charity, but to earn as much profit as he could possibly make; it was for the buyer to satisfy himself about the quality and soundness of the article he purchased. Because one had become a devotee, one should not behave as a fool, he said, and one should try to extract as much as was due to him and, if possible, something more.

Living in an age as he did in which society as well as the individual life had been affected, and largely conditioned, by the predominance of commercial interests, it is but natural that Ramakrishna's dealings should fit in with the existing scheme of social behaviour. In times like this, every action has to be preplanned, weighed and appropriately timed; the details and the pattern of execution have to be worked out well ahead of the schedule; any lapse anywhere would lead to failure and disappointment. We find in Ramakrishna the same

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spirit of planning and concern about trivial details whenever he happened to draw up a programme for himself. It may even be such a minor thing as visiting a devotee's house in Calcutta; he would schedule the various items of his programme in such a manner that his work done, he could return to Dakshineswar well in time as decided and fixed by him. Once it so happened that he and a devotee were on their way to Calcutta, and the vehicle in which they were travelling had already moved to some distance from Dakshineswar when Ramakrishna suddenly enquired of his follower whether he had taken a towel as well along with other necessary things. The devotee replied in the negative, and said that a towel could be procured from the house they were visiting. On hearing this Ramakrishna stopped the vehicle, and insisted that the devotee should run back and bring the towel. Many such events could be related; they indicate his solicitude for minor and trivial details.

Men living in the present age have been educated in the technique of struggle for existence; they are conversant with the stark, sordid realities of life. More than all the generations that have gone before, they have learnt that all that glitters is not gold. The external garb and appearance of an ascetic does not any longer command respect and veneration. A person in the garb of an ascetic is not welcomed, is looked upon with disfavour and probably with some amount of suspicion. Ordinary men, on the other hand, search in an ascetic for qualities which they have by tradition learnt to appreciate; they try to take a measure of the human values in him. In other words, in this age the difference between the householder and the traditional ascetic is gradually disappearing so far as the external indications are concerned; one is trying to come nearer the other. That is why we find Ramakrishna discarding the external physical manifestations of renunciation. His renunciation was completely from within. He therefore did not adopt the traditional saffron garb of an ascetic, or the external symbols of any established order of monks. He lived the life of a simple householder in order to bring home to his numerous followers the cardinal points of his preaching that for attaining supreme spiritual realisation, it was not necessary to give up hearth and home, to become a recluse and retire to forest for a penance and meditation. It is this aspect of his mental projection that is found reflected in his fervent prayer to the Divine Mother, 'O Mother, do not make me a cut and dry ascetic; fill me with a sense of feeling and appreciation'. It is this attitude that prompted Ramakrishna to dissuade many a devotee from renouncing the household and adopting an ascetic's life. He realised that life had become a hard struggle and impressed on his householder devotees the desirability of their working for a living and supporting the families created by them. He used to say that if one has to fight against addiction to material things, it would be advantageous to direct the battle from within the house, using it as a fort, in order to vanquish the enemies represented by the weaknesses of flesh and mind. A man however should not rest contented simply by remaining a householder however pious he might be; he should also look beyond the walls of his house; the scope of his support and service should not be limited to the members of his family; it should also include people outside the house; it should be extended if possible to include all humanity, all living organisms. The mental attitude should be service, blended with humility, to all forms of life as manifestations of the Supreme Being. Said he, what an insignificant being you are to show piety to fellow creatures, you should on the other hand be of service to them with the realisation that they are parts of the Supreme Manifestation. His stress on service has led to its adoption as the cardinal principle underlying the super-structure of the Ramakrishna Mission founded by his followers. It would be superfluous to point out that organised, voluntary service has been developed as a distinctive feature of the present age. How specifically do Ramakrishna's

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teaching answer the demands of the present age!

Ramakrishna's stress on service provides us with a clue to his character and the working of his mind. He was full of piety and the milk of human kindness. He had consideration and consolation for all types of people with whom he came in contact. The degraded and the down-trodden claimed his attention as much as the people belonging to a higher social order. It is this mental process which led him to perceive the manifestation of the Divine Mother in a scavenger boy, or a maid servant or even in a prostitute. He would bring comfort and solace equally to persons belonging to different spiritual levels, and would recommend appropriate uplifting courses to them, each according to his capacity, just as a physician would recommend different diets to his patients in view of the varying efficiency of their digestive organs. Ramakrishna would disown none; in his wide, wide heart everyone had a place.

The present age is also the age of science, the age of logical reasoning, the age of dialectic thinking. It is an age of experimental investigation, of practical demonstration. All inferences and conclusions must be based on facts, and the data obtained tested and proved by acceptable technique and instrumentation. The outlook of the entire human race has been marked by a spirit of enquiry. Nothing can be handed over for acceptance by the force of authority. As in the sphere of science, so also in the domain of social concepts and politics, power and authority have been undermined and swept away by democratic ways of thinking. In such a state of affairs, it is inevitable that religion should also become democratised and cease to be a mystic power; it should be transformed into an acceptable commodity; it cannot be thrust down into unwilling hands by a mere show of authority. Spiritual experience must also become objects of enquiry and experimentation in order to make it acceptable. It is in these fields that Ramakrishna made his chief contribution. He gave out nothing which he did not himself subject to appropriate enquiry and experimental observation. He did not ask anyone to accept anything by force of authority. He experimented with different religious practices; he lived different religions. He took instructions from different masters in different schools of Hindu religious cult; from Ramaite sadhus, from Totapuri, from Bhairavi Brahmani, to mention a few. He took training in Bhakti, in Vaishnava, in Shakta, in Tantric systems, in symbol worship, in Jnana Marga, in short in all the possible prevalent forms of Hindu religious thoughts and practice. He learnt not only the theoretical tenets underlying them, but also performed the elaborate long-drawn practical rituals enjoined by the different systems. He got himself initiated by another master, a Muslim divine, and lived the life of a devout Muslim undergoing the religious discipline enjoined by Islam. During this period, he says, he became so much imbued by Islamic thought that he even spurned the idea of visiting the temple of the Divine Mother. Similarly he practised Christianity. Practising each of these faiths, he could attain the state of supreme spiritual realisation. These experiments he undertook to convince himself that supreme spiritual realisation could be attained by ways and methods advocated by any religion. It is not necessary to change one's religion for this purpose. His entire life may be looked upon as a practical demonstration of this basic conception underlying his teachings.

Not only with different religious systems, but also in the conduct of his own life, he would carry on experiments to be convinced of the meaning of genuineness of the practices he adopted and his ways of living. He would for example practise renunciation by taking a lump of mud in one hand and coins in the other, and, like a scientist working with an ingenious measuring apparatus, would come to the conclusion that both of them meant the same thing and throw them into the waters of the Ganga with the same spirit of careless abandon. He never preached anything about the truth of which he was not himself convinc-

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ed by the performance of appropriate experiments. He always encouraged his disciples, and all those who were drawn to him, to enquire into his ways of living, to examine him, to make him the subject of experimental study in order to satisfy themselves that he was a suitable person who could be accepted by them.

Before him, each religious teacher specialised in spiritual tenets and practice initiated and perfected by him. But Ramakrishna alone specialised in the thought-content of all major religions of the world, and actually practised the rituals recommended by them. It is because of this reason that he was a welcome figure in all social strata and religious assemblies. A devotee with the Divine Mother, he was an equally acceptable person with the Vaishnavas as well as in the Brahmo religious organisations who were opposed to any form of idol worship. Words of rare wisdom fell from the lips of this illiterate man. But because of his spirit of enquiry and experimentation, a special significance, and even authority, was imparted to his teachings. This is why his words had an equal appeal to the intellectual, to persons on a highly developed spiritual level as well as to the ordinary layman. This is the reason why he could draw to himself such dynamic personalities as Keshub Chandra and Vivekananda as also the humdrum householder.

Ramakrishna was no revivalist. He did not try to revitalise dead dogmas and re-establish old values, and foist them on a world sick for countless generations with the clash of religious ideals. He did not dream of any forest civilisation or Ram Rajya. He did not preach any new religious principles. He even did not attempt a synthesis of various current religious systems, as was ineffectually done by some of the earlier masters in order to bridge the gulf between different extant religions. He did not create an assembly of converts. He merely dressed anew the abiding principles of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* in a manner so as to make them acceptable to the modern mind. From his enquiry and experimentation he brought a new hope to the old, weary world and to the distracted, disillusioned humanity, and that was *Yata mat tata path* — as many faiths are there, so many are the paths for the attainment of supreme spiritual experience. Ramakrishna's *sadhana* is therefore of special significance to the modern age.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S IDEAL OF CHARACTER—BUILDING EDUCATION

MOHINI NAKRA

Vivekananda, the man-making monk, did not often speak on education as such but he taught us the process of character-building which is the very essence of education.

Strength was the keyword of his teaching. He wanted us to have 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel'.

'You will be nearer heaven through football, than through the study of the Gita,' he declared implying thereby, that in so far as playing football amounts to the practice of the precepts of the Gita, it is more likely to help in the realization of the truth, than the mere study of the words of the Gita by a mind that has not the power to follow nor to act.

'Be strong, be manly,' he said on another occasion, and added, 'I have great respect, even for one who is wicked, as long as he is manly and strong, for his strength will make him someday, give up his wickedness and eventually bring him to the truth.'

Education according to Vivekananda was an assimilation of life-building, man-making

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and character-building ideas, and not a mere stuffing of the brain with information, which remains undigested throughout life. He said :

> 'If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.'

But by assimilation of ideas, Swamiji did not imply mere acceptance and mental accumulation of popular concepts. Education he held to be a process of the awakening of one's own thinking faculties. It is the evolution of the capacity to see the truth behind appearances, tranquility behind storms, the real behind the unreal, the unity of life behind the apparent diversity. It is the emergence of Divine Omnipotence from man's humility.

Education thus, is a way of moulding life, a process of becoming, a means of self-fulfilment integrating our manifold and often naturally exclusive personalities. It ranges from training in the physical plane to the attainment of the highest end in life, i.e. self-realization. That is why Swamiji repeatedly stressed the importance of physical, no less than mental and spiritual well being.

He taught this truth by exhortation, as well as by example. The edifice of his own character was built on the bed-rock of self-reliance. He never took anything for granted. The words of Sri Ramakrishna Himself, the God-Incarnate, he tested at every stage before he accepted them. Like Zoroaster, the Buddha, and other great Masters before him, and like his own God-guru, he taught us never to accept anything merely because a great master says so, but to verify the truth for ourselves. Truth that cannot be tested and verified by reason is no truth at all. He said :

> 'Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from childhood, but reason it all out, and after you have analysed it, and then if you find it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it, and help others to live up to it.'

Self-reliance was Swamiji's basic teaching. In the spiritual field it meant the discovery of and identification with the Self. In the intellectual and mental field it constituted a crusade against blind acceptance of theories and beliefs, and in the field of action, it appeared as ceaseless effort and perseverance. You get what you deserve, he taught and hopefully added, you can deserve what you work for. In his own life many a storm arose to sweep him off his feet, but he held fast like an anchored ship. He had decided to give his Master's message of spiritual rejuvenation to the world, and we know that before his fiery spirit all obstacles melted away.

How is one to acquire such strength of body, and such indomitable power of will as Vivekananda wanted us to have? His clear answer to this question is, 'through service'.

Experience of spiritual bliss may be possible through psychic control but character can be achieved only by meeting life face to face, not in the manner of an aggressive adventurer, but in the spirit of service. True education is synonymous with dedication to service. Swamiji insisted that it is the duty of the educated Indians to help the downtrodden masses, by giving them education, and uprooting the caste system. He did not want to destroy the 'Brahmin, but to raise the level of the others also to that of the Brahmin'.

He repeatedly stressed regeneration through individual uplift, because it is in the totality of national strength that the individual also finds his fulfilment. Swamiji wanted strong men and women in a young, vigorous and progressive India. He considered it a mockery to teach religion to a hungry man. He insisted that hungry men should be fed first.

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense pays not the least heed to them.'

Service of man — service rendered in a spirit of humility and dedication, was thus the hallmark of education as conceived by Swamiji. This was also the religion that he taught. There is in fact, ultimately, no difference between education and religion, just as in the final analysis there is no distinction between

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means and the end, because the means become the end, and true education becomes true realization — which is religion.

The religion that Swamiji taught, was the religion of the divinity of man. The goal, he said, is to manifest this divinity within, and the means of manifestation that he specially emphasized was enlightened service. Today when our material poverty and national ill-health, stand in relief against the prosperity of economically advanced countries, we need the message of Vivekananda, more than we did, even in his own day.

We have hard work to do. Can we rise up to the occasion? If we can do the task before us, in the way Swamiji wanted us to do, and not in the spirit of self-aggrandizement, which is unfortunately becoming more and more evident, we will have fulfilled the work that the great Master gave us. We could then call ourselves educated.

May He give us the strength of body, the power of intellect, and above all the warmth and light of his Universal Love. May He make us integrated wholes, worthy children of Blissful Immortality.

CONCEPT OF YOGA AND YOGESWARA IN THE GITA

S. N. RAO

What is Bhagavad Gita? It is a dialogue between the human spirit and the Divine Spirit, between *Jivātman* and the *Paramātman,* in other words, between Man and God. It is a supreme example of direct communion between the worshipper and the worshipped. The subject-matter of the dialogue, in the words of the colophon at the end of every chapter, is concisely defined under two heads, namely, *Brahma-vidyāyām* and *Yoga-sāstre.* These two expressions constitute the two keys to the doors of knowledge and wisdom that is contained in the Gospel of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. *Brahma-vidya* is obviously the knowledge of Brahman, but Brahman Itself is declared as indeterminable by thought and inexpressible by word. It is the original key and we must leave it as it is. We can only take up the duplicate key which is *Yoga Sastra,* and try to open this sacred treasure chest. We must know what this duplicate key is before we can use it. Here, the term '*Sastra*' cannot be taken in the rigid orthodox sense of unalterable laws. We have to take it as equivalent to the modern term 'Science'. The object of the Gita is not merely to give us the knowledge of Brahman, but also to show us the way how to get that knowledge. That way is the way of the Science of Yoga. What is Yoga? In the Gita, it is essentially a system of disciplines and controls for the purification and sublimation of the human mind, human action and human conduct. The purpose of these disciplines is to bring about a union between the human mind and the cosmic mind, giving rise to some unity, continuity and conformity between human action and cosmic action. When human action runs in agreement with cosmic action, all such human action becomes an action for '*Lokasangraha*', i.e., for the sustenance of world order. That is the basic motive behind the principle of *Nishkāma-Karma.* Yoga is therefore the power controlling every thought, every word and every deed.

It is not blind Bhakti, but disciplined, incessant, silent God-consciousness which is called '*Bhakti Yoga*'. It is not mere action or work but controlled and disciplined, dedicated action which is called '*Karma-Yoga*'. It is not mere knowledge but integral knowledge, knowledge with wisdom which is called '*Jnana-Yoga*'. *Jnānam vijnāna sahitam.*

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Buddhi is the essential element in all these Yogas. Buddhi, as we all know, is the discriminating faculty of the human mind. It is the faculty of differentiating the real from the unreal, truth from falsehood. That faculty will arise only when the mind is controlled and disciplined. Yoga in the Gita is not Hatha-Yoga and other physical exercises or '*asanas*'. What is aimed at is a controlled and well regulated life. '*Samatwam*' or equipoise, equanimity, is one great feature of a Yogi (Gita, II-48), but that '*Samatwam*' or evenness of mind is unattainable without a controlled mind. Skill in action (*Karmasu-kausalam*) is another conspicuous feature of a Yogi, and that is not possible without Buddhi-Yoga discipline. We get an approximately correct portrait of a Yogi in the following verse (VI-17) of the Gita :

Yuktāhāra vihārasya, Yuktacestasya karmasu,
Yukta-swapnāvabodhasya, Yogo-bhavati duhkhahā.

This definition covers the whole range of human action, and at every point of that action, one must possess the sense of 'Yuktahood', if I am permitted to use that expression. We must therefore link up all our ways of God-realisation, namely of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma, and get at a synthesis, a union of all ways in what Sri Krishna calls '*Buddhi-Yoga*' (Gita, XVIII-57). This, I consider, is the final conclusion of the Gospel of the Gita in its practical application to our daily life and conduct.

Work or some activity is an all-comprehensive fact of human existence. It may be on the level of instinct or on the level of reason; it may be conscious or unconscious action. That is the axiomatic truth, a scientific fact which is contained in the Gita verse '*Nahi kaschit kshanamapi jātu tistati akarmakrit.*' All that human activity or movement is an attempt to adjust oneself integrally with the environment, i.e., with the universe of men and things in which man finds himself, and the purpose can only be the realisation of all that is truth, beauty and goodness in human life, *Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*. We mentioned cosmic action and added that there is a relation between human action and that cosmic action. What is cosmic action? And where do we see the link, the relation between cosmic action and human action? We get the answer from the Gita itself. '*Bhuta-bhavodbhavakaro visargah karmasamjnitah*'. That eternally creative activity out of which all names and forms, past, present and future, emanate and evolve, the creative activity in its totality, is what is called '*Karmasamjnitah*' in the language of the Gita, or cosmic action or cosmic evolution in the language of modern Science. It is a broad definition comprehending in one sweep the totality of the whole cosmic activity.

In the Karmayoga chapter of the Gita, Sri Krishna has given us a significant aspect of cosmic activity, indicating its relation to human action. The urge behind all cosmic activity is the Spirit of Sacrifice which is called '*Adhi-yajna*' in the Gita, indwelling all entities in the universe manifesting itself as '*Ojas*' to sustain the said entities, and as '*Vaiswānara*' in all living organisms (Gita, XV-13 & 14). A particular aspect of this cosmic activity is what is described in Chap. III as follows :— 'From food creatures come into being; from rain food is produced; from the sacrificial action of the five elements, rain comes into being. This sacrificial action is cosmic activity which is itself born of *Brahmā* as the Creator. Therefore, *Brahma* covers all and centres round that sacrificial work. *Prajā* and *Yajna*, i.e., created beings and Sacrifice are simultaneous productions in the process of creation, and hence those creatures attain prosperity by the application of the principle of *Yajna*. The purpose of all action, both human and cosmic, is *Yajna*. If you respect and cherish the cosmic powers, the same cosmic powers respect and cherish you, and you get what you desire and deserve.' Cosmic life and human life, cosmic action and human action are thus interrelated and interdependent. According to the Gita, the prin-

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ciple of *Yajna* should be the common factor in both cosmic and human action, and therefore serve as a link between the two. We have here a clear description of cosmic movement, the movement of world *chakra*, and also a clear indication of the extent of relation and interdependence between one spoke and every other spoke of the cosmic wheel. Each spoke represents a cosmic power which the Gita calls *Deva*. It is on the basis of mutual help and co-operation inherent in these *Devas* that the universe is made to revolve and evolve, operating on the principle *Yajna*. Sri Krishna asks every one of us to apply the same principle at the human level, the level of human action. All this only means that man should move and conduct himself in accordance with the movement of World Chakra. If not, he is the only loser; neither the cosmos nor the cosmic movement is disturbed or affected. Dr Radhakrishnan has put the substance of this teaching very lucidly thus: 'The individual and the cosmos depend on each other. There is a constant interchange between human life and world life. He who works for himself lives in vain. The world is in progress because of this co-operation between the human and the divine.'

We thus see that, next in importance to the principle of *Yoga*, is this principle of *Yajna*, according to the teaching in the Gita. What is this *Yajna* principle? The term '*Yajna*' as used in the Gita does not mean the ritualistic *Yajna* of the Vedas. Here, the term has a very much wider significance than what we find in the Vedas. It is meant to apply to every deed done in a dedicative mood, as an offering and a sacrifice for the fulfilment of cosmic purpose. God Himself is indwelling all bodies as the basis of sacrifice, as '*Adhi-Yajna*' (Gita, VIII-4). This *Adhi-Yajna* principle signifies that the presence of the Lord as '*Antaryamin*' is not a mere passive presence; it is an incessant activity for *Lokasangraha* or world sustenance. All that is in human action should therefore be correlated to the *Adhi-Yajna* principle indwelling each one of us. In the absence of the application of the *Yajna* principle, all action becomes a bondage. This concept of *Yajna* is closely associated with, rather is included in the concept of *Lokasamgraha*. All action and movement on the cosmic scale is for the maintenance of the world order, and therefore all action and movement on the human scale should also be for the maintenance of the same world order in which we all move and have our being and with which we are intimately related. Every action done with *Lokasamgraha* consciousness comes under Karma-Yoga principle. The concept of *Yajna* permeates in and through all that goes under the name of Karma-Yoga. When that permeation takes place, all human action becomes an action for *Lokasamgraha*. The concept of *Lokasamgraha* contains all the three factors of relative existence, namely, Creation, Preservation and Destruction. The Kurukshetra War is primarily a war for *Lokasamgraha*. The much talked of principles of violence and non-violence are relative truths, not absolute at all times and under all conditions, and have only a relative importance in the working of *Lokasamgraha* principle. The Lord in the Gita says 'I have no need to work. There is nothing that I have to get, and nothing that I have not. And yet, I continue in action.' (Gita, III-22). You only join in action along with the Lord, in the attempt to be in tune with the Infinite. Life is not a passive and a purely contemplative existence; it is a battle, and ascetic solution is not a solution for that battle. *Lokasamgraha* does, however, involve a spirit of renunciation. But that renunciation is not a retreat or retirement into caves and forests. There is no other term in religion and philosophy which is so ill-used and ill-understood as this term 'Renunciation'. Swami Turiyananda, a great Sanyasi of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, has given us a correct interpretation of the term in the following words:— 'It is not just giving up, not a mere negative attitude. It is a spiritual positive, declaring at all times and under all conditions "Not I but Thou".' It is the giving up of the ego-self, me and mine attitude. It is the giving up of

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everything that is low for things higher and higher.

We thus have three pivotal principles on which the teaching in the Gita is based, the teaching in its practical application to our daily life and conduct, namely the Principles of *Yoga, Yajna and Lokasamgraha.* All the *margas* or ways of God-realisation traditionally known as Bhakti, Karma and Jnana, must necessarily rest on these three principles, without which the value and significance of these *margas* is very much diminished. In *Yoga,* the Supreme Lord is *Yogeswara.* In *Yajna,* the same Supreme Lord is *Adhi-Yajna.* In *Lokasamgraha,* the same Supreme Lord is the Creator, Preserver and the Destroyer, Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, all the three in One.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'AHAM'

S. SUBRAHMANYA IYER

'Aham' is the cosmic principle of awareness — 'Chit' and with 'Chit Sakti' it is consciousness in life. It is the Negative, Masculine, Finite principle of creation. It is the separating and asserting principle that persists in 'Individuality'. It is ever dynamic, self-assertive and individualistic that marks the stamp of uniqueness to one's personality. It is the Ego — the Creative Spirit in man, the father of all Rajasic tendencies as opposed to the positive, feminine, sublimating universal principle of love, the mother of all Sattvic tendencies. It is the 'Evolving principle of life' and has qualitative stages in 'Spiritual Evolution'.

'Aham' has no particular abode in life. It is the 'Individualised light of consciousness' pervading the whole personality. In its functional aspects at different levels of consciousness, it is named differently as 'I', Ego, Spirit, Self, Soul, Jiva and so on. They are only different names of 'one total consciousness'. At the superficial level of waking consciousness, with the awareness of gross body and senses, it is 'I'. At the deeper level of subconscious with the awareness of the mind and thinking, it is subtle Ego. At the super-conscious or unconscious level in its intuitive functionings, it is the Creative Spirit of man. As an evolving entity, it is Self or Soul or Jiva. It has its past, present and future and carries from life to life its psychic bundle with its 'Vasanas and samskaras' — tendencies and propensities in a 'Complex of Swabhava'.

'Aham' is the master within; the body with all its senses, organs, instruments and faculties, is only its 'Vehicle of Evolution'. Parents contribute this evolutionary mechanism for the soul to carry on its spiritual journey from life to life. In relationship with other souls it is in various degrees of 'Attraction or repulsion' according to the fundamental affinity of the souls. The positive Bhava in attraction is Love. 'Aham' as soul is different from Atman, for Atman is only a qualitative state of Divinity, and not an entity. But when the soul evolves, elevates and culminates in that state, then it is 'Brahman', and declares 'Aham Brahmasmi' — I am Brahman. Till then the souls are in different stages in the Spiritual evolution.

In the first phase of the cosmic evolution — 'Cosmic Descent' urged by the separating tendency of the Masculine principle, the souls detach from the unity and drift farther and farther away to greater and greater diversities. In the second phase, the souls attracted by the universal principle of Love, co-operate with each other and evolve harmony in diversity. In the final phase of Cosmic ascent, they have to evolve further and merge in the same goal — the ocean of Bliss — Ananda — the source of all creation.

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The cosmic process is a sport, a play — Lila, between the two cosmic principles, Purusha and Prakriti — Masculine and feminine, the two opposite poles acting and reacting on each other according to the Divine Law. Divinity is the inherent bond of attraction between them and is the integrating, harmonising and unifying principle of creation. The two principles are the two natures of the Supreme Divinity, Finite-infinite and Infinite-finite. The Divinity does not participate in the play. It is the all-pervading presence, the Magnetic Field, in the Nucleus Centre, 'Sakshi' — the 'Cosmic umpire'.

Before the beginning of the cosmic cycle, the whole universe was held in a potential state as Cosmic seed in the cosmic womb — 'Hiranya-garbha'. The Cosmic Evolution is only the unfoldment of potentialities of the cosmic seed, in full Self-expression. This whole universe in manifestation is only the emergence of that which already existed potentially in the 'Seedform'; as tree exists potentially in the seed itself. The cosmic play is enacted in three stages of emergence, divergence and submergence; Shrishti, Sthiti and Laya.

Individual life is an opportunity for the soul for full self-expression of its potentialities and evolve into the State of 'Sat-Chit-Ananda'. Life is the field for creative exercise of higher centres within, for power, wisdom and bliss. 'Aham' — the creative spirit of man, is the active, dynamic, Rajasic principle, the prime motivator of the life-urge for Ananda. It is rational, revolutionary and creative and when it blends with the universal principle of love, and sattvic tendencies, it elevates life. It has to get over the binding limitations of Maya.

'Aham' manifests in three states of consciousness — Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti — waking state, dream state and deep-sleep state — as conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious, with respective analytical, synthetic and intuitive faculties. Our senses are only projections from our inner faculty centre, canalised and focussed, for the detailed analytical study of the particulars, and to negotiate with the objective environment. They carry only a very limited capacity of our inner faculty. The senses and the waking consciousness constitute the objective mind. It is only a fraction of our total consciousness, and we are aware of only a very little part of our own 'Self'. Deep in the subjective, in our sub-conscious and unconscious lie dormant, our greater potentialities, powers and faculties. We have yet to tap them and link with our conscious Being.

The cosmic principle of 'Aham' can never be annihilated as long as there is manifestation of life. Its 'Individuality' and 'Self-interest' persist to the very end. Only it elevates from the gross and narrow self-interest to subtle and enlightened self-interest. Its urge for Ananda maintains creative grit and vigour of life. 'Wife is dear not because of the wife, but because of the Self; children are dear not because of the children, but because of the Self; property is dear not because of property, but because of the Self.'—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. All relationships, acquisitions and achievements are only the means to one's own 'Ananda'. But supreme bliss, enduring and elevating can be had only by tapping higher powers and faculties in the spiritual plane, and life is an adventure towards this end.

'Aham' can either be sublimated to the Universal, through devotion in total surrender — Bhakti marga; or consciously elevated and integrated with the 'Universal' — Jnana marga. The first is a direct and an easy path and is dominated by the feminine principle. But in the attitude of 'Total surrender', they lose the masculine grit and vigour, dynamic and creative urge in life. They transcend lower egotistic and Rajasic tendencies and directly take shelter in the 'light of the Universal', which are Omnipresent in themselves. They are purely religious and sentimental and moved by sublime emotions and rest on the lap of Divinity — Samadhi. Majority of the seekers are generally feminine in temperament, and take to this easy path of sublimation in total surrender. They are saints and mystics,

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and there are various paths in the sublimation process. Though they enjoy bliss, they miss many steps and many aspects of Reality, and cannot afford rational explanation to their experience; for, it is a direct intuitive manipulation in the 'unconscious', without integration with the 'conscious'.

Only a few are truly masculine in spirit, and are capable of conscious integration of the 'Individual' with the 'Universal'. Combining Jnana and Yoga, they maintain a good blend of both Individuality and Universality. They are both Rational and Religious, Jnana and Prema blend in one. They are 'Raja Yogis' and take to this difficult path and 'Tread on Razor's edge'. They are both Rajasic and Sattvic. They are Yogis, Sages and Seers. They are truly revolutionary and creative; rational and scientific. They alone can afford Rational explanation to the 'Reality' they experience. They are consciously in tune with the 'Universal', and live from moment to moment unruffled, from the 'root of Being' — 'sthita-prajna'. They are the vanguards, and the torch-bearers of 'Spiritual Evolution'. They have left their 'footprints on the sands of time'.

When man elevates and is conscious of the 'true values of life', and is charged with the impersonal and universal cause, then he is truly creative. He perceives the same 'Life, Law and Purpose' pervading the Individual and the Universal. His supreme self urge for Ananda, is in tune with the 'Universal Cause', and he identifies with it. In honour and self-dignity, he is magnanimous, and dedicates his life to the 'higher cause', in the spirit of Tyaga and Yajna. Let us recall the Upanishadic prayer that brings out the spirit and purpose of life; for, prayer indirectly, is willing, wishing and affirming for one's self; — Lead me from darkness of ignorance to the Light of the Super-conscious; from weakness to strength and creativity of the Spirit; from cycle of life and death to Immortality — to merge in the ocean of Bliss.

GOKULĀSHTAMI

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

In the narrow prison of my self
I see the Divine, Krishna, being born.
Deceived is the Demon Kamsa; he
Waited to thwart the Divine Birth in me.

Go, Krishna, from the prison walls,
And grow in the fields of Light in my heart,
Grow in the midst of Joy till Time is ripe
To end the reign of Kamsa in my realm.

I KNOW THAT YOU WOULD COME

U. TALUKDAR

I know that you would come —
When of this mad world
All the noises in the night's darkness's
Depth will bury themselves,
When this body of mine
In your love will melt

And disappear,
Then you would come
Lightening the ten cardinal points
Like a burning wick;
This body of mine will be the lamp,
On it you would burn.

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THE SILHOUETTE OF SOCRATES

S. SUBHASH CHANDRA

A telescope of time, if reversed to 399 B.C. and concentrated upon the archonship of Laches in Athens, would bring within our perspective a spacious room in a prison wherein is occurring an episode of immense historical importance. An old but still robust man is sitting on a couch with his feet resting upon the floor of the room. Around him are seated about a score of men. A chilly awareness of an impending tragedy is settled on their melancholy miens. Their thoughts are stranded on a desert of depression. For the man in their midst is scheduled to die that day. This cynosure of the forty eyes is almost entirely bald, his eyes are situated on a 'kind of ridge' on his face and are staring out, he has an extremely flat and broad nose and his nostrils are 'wide and turned up towards heaven', his lips are thick and large, the moustaches are so dense and ample that they almost fully shade off the upper lip, and the long and rather unkempt beard completely conceals his neck. This umbrage of ugliness, however, masks but feebly the unpretentious and yet compelling dynamism of the personality of this man. The pristine purity of character and a profound diaphaneity of the intellect seep through the irregular arrangement of the facial lineaments. He and his compeers, appropriately enough, are absorbed in an earnest and animated elucidation of the undesirability of suicide, the immortality of the soul, the doctrines of the transmigration and re-birth of souls, the nature of life beyond death, and the evanescence of the mundane pleasures. The discussion is enlivened by a frequent interspersion of droll interludes and facetious remarks. Meanwhile, time passes away as a tale is told, and the morning's glare is replaced by the evening's soft repose. Sensing the approach of the fatal hour, he is asked if his friends can render any service to his children. 'Nothing particular,' he replies, 'only, as I have always told you, take care of yourselves.' He is next asked the way in which he would like to be buried. 'In any way that you like,' he rejoins. He then goes into a chamber and takes the last bath of his life. He next meets his children and women of his family and, after imparting them a few directions, bids them go away. Presently, the jailor enters the room and, with a choked voice, announces the approach of the hour of departure. A little later, the jailor re-enters the room bearing a cup of poison in his hand. The cup is handed over to the condemned man, who quite readily and without a flicker of sorrow swallows its contents. His friends, hitherto restrained by the lofty and inspiring fortitude and forbearance of their hero, are unable to contain their grief any longer. They wail piteously. Their sorrow streams copiously through the watery vocabulary of tears. The hemlock begins its infernal work. The legs of the condemned man now falter. He sits down and reclines on the floor. He covers his face with a piece of cloth. When he feels the presence of poison around his groin, he uncovers his face, and avers: 'Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt? The debt shall be paid, said Crito; is there anything else? There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.'[1] Such was the mortal end of an immortal life. So died Socrates, the Athenian, with the mead of martyrdom set on his head.

The life and martyrdom of Socrates indubitably constitute an important chapter in the annals of Greek history. In the imposing cavalcade of the Greats of Greece, Socrates stands as a veritable Colossus, a god among men and a man among gods, so incomparably

[1] *The Dialogues of Plato*, Jowett's translation (third edition, Oxford), Vol. I, p. 120.

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great as to cramp and capsize all efforts at comparison. Among the predecessors of Socrates were great philosophers like Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles and Anaxagoras. But, so thoroughly dwarfed are they by the prodigious genius of Socrates that, the contemporary historians rubricate them as merely the 'pre-Socratics'. There were after Socrates such intellectual giants as Plato and Aristotle, whose exquisite contributions verily embody the apogee of the Athenian culture. But when viewed in terms of the assimilative abandon and exuberance of the intellect of the Martyr of Athens they emerge as little more than academicians not uncommonly fettered to the stale sophistications and picayune pedantries of the age. In fact, the beginning of Greek philosophy may truly be taken to coincide with the advent of Socrates. For, the philosophy anterior to Socrates consisted of a recalcitrant logic hoisted upon a clumsy cobweb of intuitions vitiated to the verge of inanity and an assortment of crude conjectures, hazy hypothesis and pompous presuppositions, enlivened by an assemblage of ideational oddities and interspersed with flashes of fancy. It was Socrates who put an end to this anarchy of the intellect, relieved philosophy of these accumulated nuances of naivety, and fortified logic by a dose of dialectics. Socrates, therefore, was not just an intervening hyphen, or a connecting link, in the chain of Greek philosophy. He was a landmark, a milestone, and a point of departure.

Socrates was born in 469 or 470 B.C. at Athens. He was the son of Sophroniscus, who is generally believed to have been a sculptor, though this, to Prof. Taylor, 'seems to be only a misrepresentation of a playful remark in Plato.'[2] We know nothing about the earlier education of Socrates. He probably followed the profession of his father for some time. His mother Phaenarete was a midwife, though, perhaps, not a professional one. His wife, Xanthippe is as celebrated for her violent temper as Cleopatra for her nose. Socrates had three sons: Lamprocles, Sophroniscus and Menexenus; and a step-brother by the mother's side known as Patrocles.

The life of Socrates constitutes an inimitable equilibrium of opposites. It denotes an alliance of antinomies. He was, so to speak, the efflorescence of the Stoic and the Epicure alike. Like other ancient Athenians, he was a votary of Dionysus. His devotion to Dionysus, however, was sedately tempered by his Apollonian inclines. The drowsy delectations of wine were usually shared to soothe the frayed tempers occasioned by philosophical disquisitions often tinged with anger and acrimony. But his intake of wine was never so excessive as to prostrate him to the verge of inebriation. However, if called upon, he could drink more than any one else without forfeiting his poise of personality. In the *Symposium* we find that after a night of continuous and, towards the end, heavy drinking and vigorous elucidation of the philosophy of love, every one aside from Socrates lapses into the embrace of inebriation. Socrates alone refuses to bow to Bacchus, and continues to impress upon his drowsy companions that 'the genius of comedy was the same with that of tragedy.' The Dionysus in Socrates would yearn to expatiate over the athletically chiselled limbs of Alcibiades. But when this handsome youth made some ribald advances towards him, the Sage of Athens responded with such contemptuous and derisive indifference as to tear into shreds Alcibiades' pride of proportion. Verily, then, was Socrates an exquisite amalgam of the recluse and the libertine.

The spirit of renunciation was firmly embedded in the mental make-up of Socrates. He was wedded to a disinterested pursuit of truth. His intellectual outlook was never marred by the miasma of an inane egoism, which thrives in the arrogance of authorship and seeks self-preservation through the clauses of the Copyright Act. He wrote no book and he sought no recognition. Further, unlike the Sophists, he demanded no remuneration for

[2] A. E. Taylor's article on *Socrates* in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th edition, Vol. XX, p. 915.

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imparting knowledge to others. He eschewed every variety of extravagance, and his entire life was an essay in simplicity. According to Xenophon, Socrates was never 'fine or ostentatious in his clothes or sandals, or in any of his habits of life.'[3] Like the sages of India, Socrates was vigilantly alive to the need for tearing asunder the fetters of terrestrial desires. When Antipho, the Sophist, reproached him for remaining content with his poverty, Socrates rejoined: 'You, Antipho, resemble one who thinks that happiness consists in luxury and extravagance; but I think that to want nothing is to resemble the gods, and that to want as little as possible is to make the nearest approach to the gods.'[4] Temperance and abstemiousness were the watchwords of the life of Socrates. Xenophon avers: 'He (Socrates) took only so much food as he could eat with a keen relish. . . . Every kind of drink was agreeable to him, because he never drank unless he was thirsty.'[5] Socrates was endowed with extraordinary powers of enduring pain and fatigue. He had a robust constitution and was renowned for his physical prowess. He walked barefoot in all seasons (even when the Athenian earth wore a snowy mantle), and the same clothing sufficed for him in summer as well as in winter.

Socrates, however, was not an ascetic buried beneath the frozen layers of social insularity. He was a stubborn soldier of reckoned prowess and indomitable courage. On the battlefield, Alcibiades tells us in the *Symposium*, Socrates was given to 'calmly contemplating enemies as well as friends, and making very intelligible to anybody, even from a distance, that whoever attacked him would be likely to meet with a stout resistance.'[6] He won renown at the siege of Potidaea (431-430 B.C.), and at the catastrophic battle of Delium (424 B.C.), where the Athenians suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Boeotians.

It is noteworthy that the courage of Socrates was not a personality component confined to the battle-field. It was pervasively typical of him. To resort to the jargon of the contemporary psychologist, Socrates not only possessed the trait of courageousness, but also belonged to the courageous type. His courage did not merely coincide with a soldierly pugnacity but was rooted in, and strengthened by, his sense of justice and fair-play. When the enraged Athenians had resolved, in a flagrant violation of the provisions of the law, to prosecute *collectively* the eight generals, whose criminal negligence had caused the death of 4,000 men following the great naval victory off the islets of Arginusae in 406 B.C., Socrates alone of all the senators pointedly refused to be a party to this injustice. He insisted that the provisions of the law be honoured, and, accordingly, the generals be *individually* impeached. 'When the orators threatened to impeach and arrest me, and you called and shouted, I made up my mind that I would run the risk, having law and justice with me, rather than take part in your injustice because I feared imprisonment and death.'[7]

Seven years later, Socrates was standing beside the blighted brink of the awesome vale of death. He had been condemned to die. He could not for a month be consigned to the eternally yawning jaws of death, because the 'sacred boat' annually despatched to the temple of Apollo (in grateful remembrance of Thesus' deliverance of Athens from the tribute of seven boys and seven girls imposed by Minos of Cnossus) had not yet returned, and execution of anybody before the return of the boat was deemed sacrilegious. Crito, one of the rich disciples of Socrates, strove to persuade Socrates to escape from the prison. The glitter of a few gold coins would have lulled the jail officials in a mood of negligent complacency. But Crito strove in vain. What

[3] *Memorabilia of Socrates*, by Xenophon, book I, Ch. ii, 5.

[4] *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. vi, 10.

[5] *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. iii, 5.

[6] *The Dialogues of Plato* (Random House, New York), Vol. I, p. 343.

[7] *The Dialogues of Plato* (Oxford edition), Vol. II, p. 125.

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Socrates wanted was a legal revocation of his sentence, and not an illegal evasion of what was palpably a miscarriage of justice. Nor did he seek a cowardly shelter behind a simulated concern for the spirit of the law as against the letter of the law. Socrates viewed law as an integral whole kept alive by a fusion of its inward spirit and outward linkage of letters. Any disavowal of the letter of the law would have coincided with a castration of his conscience.

Socrates' defiance of the depredatory mandates of a tyrannous oligarchy constitutes another glowing episode of his incomparable life. After the defeat of Athens, the victorious Sparta had placed it under a commission of Thirty Tyrants, which soon unleashed a reign of terror among the Athenians. The Thirty once sent for Socrates and four other Athenians, and ordered them to go and arrest Leon of Salamis, whose sole crime was that he was affluent enough to have incited the avarice of the Tyrants. While the other four went on to fulfil the disgraceful errand assigned to them, Socrates cared 'not a straw for death' and went quietly home. These three outstanding events, viz., the insistence that the generals be tried individually and not collectively, the refusal to salvage his life by means of an illegal escape and a disdainful disregard of the evil designs of an oligarchic dictatorship, are indicative of the fact that the life of Socrates was governed by an ingrained and inviolated respect for law and justice.

The pivotal point of the life of Socrates stems from an oracular pronouncement emanating from the Pythian prophetess of the temple of Delphi. Chaerephon, an early friend of Socrates, was endowed with a distinctive flair for the piquant and the paradoxical. He induced a temperamental impetuosity into his unbounded admiration for the genius of Socrates. Such an antinomial alliance was bound to constitute an awkward source of annoyance and embarrassment for Socrates. Chaerephon once visited the temple of Delphi and, without even a hazy hint of hesitation, enquired of the Oracle whether there was any man wiser than Socrates. The Oracle declared emphatically that there was no man with such ample and richly merited pretensions to wisdom as Socrates. When Socrates heard this, he asked himself: 'What can the god mean? . . . I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. . . . And yet he is a god, and cannot lie. . . . I reflected that if only I could find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a refutation in my hand.'[8] With this object in view, Socrates went around interrogating men well-known for their wisdom. He turned to his task with the conscientious zeal of a missionary. He was an honest man. He could not resort to subterfuge. He could not feign ignorance. His refutation had to be a convincing one. His antagonists had to bear the brunt of his concentrated brilliance. It was to be a war of wits.

In this war, the dialectical method was the prime weapon in the arsenal of Socrates. In the adept hand of Socrates, the dialectical method was no mere effective mode of attack. It embodied the native charm and expressive felicity of a specimen of a fine art. Indeed, Socrates wielded it not with the rugged dexterity of a cavalier, but with the consummate delicacy of an artist. It carried the sustained and yet unpretentious poise and dignity, which were so characteristic of Socrates. The touch of the artist, however, did not enfeeble the armour. It only sharpened the deadly fangs of the dialectical serpent. The dialectical method enabled Socrates to filter through the miasma of intellectual connivance and deceit, which was so rampant among his contemporaries. Socrates could now chase pedantry through its tortuous windings into open exposure. He could shake men out of the slumbers of frozen generalities, constrain them to recognise the contradictions inherent in their assertions, and underline the paradoxes lurking within their presuppositions.

The groundwork of the dialectical method was the notorious irony of Socrates. Socrates

[8] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 113

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was a modest man. He was convinced, so he said, that he was immersed in the muddy waters of ignorance! He was groping desolately in the dark! He was lost in the opaque and obscure crevices of human ignorance! Who else but his noble friends, justly esteemed for their scholastic acquisitions, could rescue him from languishing in the depths of despair? He was sure that a streak or two of pure knowledge emanating from the diaphanous intellect of his worthy friends would suffice to illumine the dense fog of ignorance encasing him. His worthy friends would fall into the trap. Their inflated egoes would constrain them to plunge into the Socratic cobweb. Complacent and careless, they would respond to the early enquiries of Socrates with ill-considered assertions hoisted upon fragile foundations. Socrates would receive these specimens of sapience with delight. He would, however, declare that, having been endowed with a feeble intellect, he is finding it difficult to grasp the involved implications of the weighty assertions, and that he would appreciate it if some clarifications are offered. In the guise of obtaining clarifications and by means of a few deft and shrewdly timed questions, Socrates would lay bare the lapses and lacunae pregnant in the theories of his friends. Some of his worthy friends would then induce hasty revisions into their early assertions. Socrates would again offer trenchant criticisms, softened of course by frequent avowals of ignorance, tearing the new positions into tiny shreds. A few of these friends, presumably more worthy than others, were great believers in strategic retreats. They would drastically alter their standpoints. But Socrates, the master tactician, would proceed with ease and equanimity and soon entangle his opponents into an inescapable mass of chaotic contradictions.

After numerous protracted and prolonged sessions of dialectical discourse, Socrates found, much to his surprise, that the Oracle, after all, was not in error. Among his contemporaries, wisdom was habitually in arrears. Most men were inclined to equate a pompous pedantry with wisdom. Inane sophistries were honoured as paradigms of profundity, and vacuous vagaries of the mind, if only couched in felicitous phrases, were cherished as abiding contributions to human knowledge. Socrates found that 'the men most in repute were all but the most foolish; and that others less esteemed were really wiser and better.'[9] As a consequence of these enquiries, then, Socrates came to the conclusion that while he neither knew nor thought that he knew, others knew nothing yet believed that they knew something, if not everything. In this respect, then, he was wiser than others.

The impact of the dialectical defeats sustained at the hands of Socrates was invariably an ineradicable one. People were almost abruptly confronted with a mocking image of ignorance hitherto concealed behind the flimsy fabric of a distended vanity. The effect was a traumatic one. It assumed two forms: One set of people, though agonised by this exposure of their ignorance, used to return to Socrates, this time in a sober and humble manner, in order to learn from him. Many of them would eventually become the disciples of the philosopher. On the other hand, there were men who would become livid in irrespressible rage and uncontrollable fury. They would swear vengeance, and not infrequently seek to assault Socrates. Their bitterness would freeze into a feud. Their animosity would acquire the shape of an entrenched antagonism, silent, sullen, and sustained. The accumulated anger of this type of adversaries was accountable for, to use the phrase of Professor Zeller, the 'judicial murder' of Socrates, to a delineation of which we shall now turn ourselves.

In 400-399 B.C., three Athenians, viz., Meletus, Anytus and Lycon, preferred the following indictment against Socrates: 'Socrates offends against the laws in not paying respect to those gods whom the city respects, and introducing other new deities, he also offends against the laws in corrupting the youth.'[10] The defence of Socrates is embodied in the

[9] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 114.

[10] *Memorabilia of Socrates*, by Xenophon, bk. I, ch. i, 1.

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Apology of Plato, which is indubitably a precious legacy of human culture. The *Apology* is the Testament of the First Martyr of Humanity. The fearless assurance of a prophet pulsates through every paragraph of this masterpiece. The impeachment, Socrates averred, was a tissue of lies. It smacked of slander, and was maliciously motivated. Its grassroots stemmed from the venomous subsoil of mortified vanities and shattered prides. He sought an honourable acquittal, and not a cowardly compromise. He, therefore, could not stoop so low as to obtain a pardon by a public parade of his wailing kith and kin. This defence, though admirable in itself, could not elicit an acquittal. Socrates had made too many enemies, and many judges were annoyed by the note of arraignment animating his defence. He was, therefore, judged guilty of the alleged crimes, though by a surprisingly small majority.

The trial now reached the second stage. Meletus, the main accuser, demanded the penalty of death. Socrates was asked to propose an alternative punishment. The magistrates, so enjoined the laws of Athens, were free to award any of the two proposed penalties. Socrates could have saved himself by proposing a serious punishment like banishment. But, endowed with a hitherto lively and now fatal sense of humour, Socrates held that he deserved a reward and not a punishment. He should be honoured with maintenance in the Prytaneum! However, since the Athenians were not inclined to do so, Socrates offered at first to pay a fine of one mina, but was later prevailed upon by Plato, Crito and Apollodorus to enhance it to thirty minae. The magistrates naturally felt outraged. Socrates appeared to sneer at them. They felt that he was investing into his trial a melodramatic content. No wonder, the incensed magistrates, now by an enhanced majority, condemned him to death. Socrates received his sentence with a characteristic equanimity, and he anticipated history when he said: 'Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates.'[11]

With this, we conclude our brief appraisal of the life and martyrdom of Socrates. Socrates, as we have seen, represents a landmark in the history of Greek culture and civilisation. In him was instinct the epitome *par excellence* of the perennially rich ramifications of the culture of Hellas. In fact, so immeasurably rich a concentrate of the best traditions of his age was he, that no one can hope to present a complete delineation of the prodigiously varied facets of his personality. Every assessment acquires only the outlines of a silhouette, but never the inner contents of a profile. Hence, our article stands under the rubric of the Silhoutte of Socrates. The keynote of the life of Socrates was undoubtedly his martyrdom. The inexorable course of history has only deepened the significance of the final words of the inimitable *Apology* of Socrates: 'The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways — I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.'[12] Yes, indeed, God knows, and so too does mankind.

[11] *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. II, p. 131.
[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 135.

The aim which Socrates set himself was not to construct a system of philosophy, but to arouse in men the love of truth and virtue, to help them to think right in order that they might live right. His purpose was practical rather than speculative; he was interested in the correct method of acquiring knowledge more than in a theory of such a method, or methodology. He did not offer a theory at all, but practised a method, lived it, and, by his example taught others to follow it.

—FRANK THILLY

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GURU ARJUN'S 'PSALM OF BLISS'

(*Translated by Harkrishan Singh* : Continued from the April issue.)

II

Sloka

Dispeller of grief and Bringer of cure,
Woe-Breaker, Haven of the Poor!
O Lord, Thou dwellest in each soul,
Each atom of dust, life-mould and bowl!
O Thou, who bearest company
Of Nanak ever, inseparably,
I, candid and humble of heart and meek
Of mind, Thy Feet's Protection seek.

Ashtapadi

(1)

Where father, mother, brother or friend,
Where son or wife unhelping stand,
There Hari's Name, know thou O mind,
With thee near ever thou shalt find.
Where dreadful spectres and sprights impend,
Where Death-sped messengers bring fright
There sole Thy Grace-borne Name shall send
Its saviour and sheltering Might.
When odds enormous storm the man
Him strong impediments surround,
Then 'tis but Hari's Name which can
Take him across the barriers' bound.
Not numerous deeds of charity
Can make him from life's bondage free,
But God's Name can abolish crores
Of sins and faults in their very source.
Mind, hymn the Name and the Word outsprung
From Guru's Truth-revealing tongue,
So that, says Nanak, is found by thee
Deep joy and ease and ecstasy.

(2)

One may be king of world-entire,
Yet grief be his companion,
But if he can God's Name acquire,
To self-delight shall turn his pain.
In billions of bonds if man is bound
Entangled in links numberless,
Then calling Hari's pure Name-sound
Can free him from all bondages.
Not Maya's senses multi-colour
Can slake the endless human thirst
But Hari-Name's Remembrance, burst
From self, is the perfect heart-fulfiller.
Where treads the steepy path of Truth
Man lone and uncompanioned,
There Hari-Name's mysterious Ruth
Becomes his helper, guide and friend.
Such saviour Name remember thou
In mind's profound tranquility
So that thou Guruward-turned may'st grow
Unto supernal Liberty.

(3)

When hands innumerable can
Not save together a stranded man,
Him Hari-Name's Remembrance pure
Makes from all dangers safe, secure.
When difficulties overcrowd,
Impediments his passage shroud,
Without delay can Hari's Name
Smash hindrances, their power lame.
Man helplessly takes cyclic rounds
Of birth and death times numberless,
By the Name break all Karmic bonds,
He wins the state of Restfulness.
The being of man with ego fraught,
Not cleans his dirt and soot from thought,
But crores of sins burn by the Flame
Immaculate of Hari's Name.
Sing such a Name, O thought refined,
Be coloured with Love, O heart divined;
Says Nanak, Hari's Name is got
By turning towards the sages' spot.

(4)

Where path of man rolls on and on,
Mile after mile unendingly,
There moves the Name along and by,
There guide is Hari's Name alone.
Where dark is in the dark's embrace,
Where night is folded in the night,
With thee sole Name there walks apace

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And Hari's Name is the only light.
On progress-path where none is thine,
Guide, helper or companion,
There is, indeed, the Name Divine,
To whom alone thou shalt be known.
Where sun is burning fervidly
And scorching heat is overhead,
There Hari's Name will shelter thee
Under its cool refreshing shade.
When thirst disquietening gives thee pain
And nothing can appease thy passion,
Then shall bring Hari-Name's Compassion,
Says Nanak, flood of the Nectar-rain.

(5)

The Name is the only stock in trade
In which the devotees keep dealing,
The Name alone has ever stayed
In the sages' mind, high Truth-revealing.
Those who are servants of God, for them
The only refuge lies in the Name,
For by It crores and crores of men
From the coils of world Liberation gain.
All night and day the sages and saints
Adore the Lord and sing His chants,
Their sleepless ardent labours lie
In earning but the Name's alchemy.
For the devotees the only treasure
Worth having is the Name of Hari;
To whom the Lord grants in good measure
This gift immortal, for him God's glory.
His servants' hearts and bodies are hued
But in His Love's beatitude;
Says Nanak, saints love-drunk are fraught
With discrimination, lore and thought.

(6)

Hari's Name for His servants is
Sole means to their soul's liberty;
In Hari's true Name only lie
Their satisfaction and their bliss.
Their life and form and face are bright
By Hari-Name's pure love and light.
In their soul-journey's Godward way,
No hindrances can ever stay.
In this consists their greatness' sign
That they are singers of His Name,
Their pride, their glory and their fame
All owe their grace to the Name Divine.
In the Name is their sole merriment
And Yogic oneness with the Lord;
Remembering It, love's conscious cord
With the Divine is never rent.
God-servants in his service stay,
Ever in Love's intoxication,
Even the gods, doth Nanak say,
Extend to them their adoration.

(7)

Hari's Name is the treasure of
His lovers, devotees, which He
Bestows, in countless measures free,
Upon them out of utter love.
Hari alone is their protection,
Sole they know glory of His Haven,
For by His Grace, each hour's reflection,
Save Him, to none else they have given.
With Hari's Name their heart and mind
Are closely knit and intertwined.
They, drunk with Hari-Name's Romance,
For ever live in moveless trance.
Through the eight winks (turns) of night
and day,
His lovers on Him meditate;
God-lovers' glory aureate
Lights up, unto the world, its way.
Men numerous by Hari's devotion
Have broken their bonds, found Freedom high,
Says Nanak, in their company,
Many have crossed life's dismal Ocean.
Hari's Name is the Paradise Tree,
Fulfiller of man's aspirations;
The Lord's Name-chants and adorations
Are all-givers, cows heavenly.
Splendid, supreme, is Hari's story
Depicting His high Grace and Glory,
Hearkening Hari's Name in heart
All pain and agony depart.
Resides within the sages' being
Great glory of the Name Divine,
O witness by their grace the fleeing
Of odds like soldiers' battered line.
When fortune favours, then alone
Companionship of saints is got;
Remembrance of the Name is sought
In sages' service humbly done.

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Nothing can stand comparison,
Ever, to the divine Name-Sound;
Says Nanak, the Name by those is found,
On whom the Guru's Grace has shone.

III

Sloka

I have, with deep and probing look,
Studied many a holy book,
I have examined numerous
Shastras, Smritis with cautiousness,
But I have found not anywhere
A thing so invaluable and rare
As, Nanak says, the Name of Hari,
Bringer of the Godhead's Grace and Glory.

Ashtapadi

(1)

Meditations and austerities,
Telling the beads of rosaries,
Knowledge; exposition lakhs
Of times of Smritis, Shastras six;
Practice of Yoga, benevolence, good,
Religious deeds, ceremonial rites;
Shunning all glamorous worldly sights
And roaming midst the desolate wood;
Devising various ways of living,
Credal injunctions, religious deeds,
Fire-sacrifice, good acts, almsgiving
Of riches, pearls, men's other needs;
Regular fasts, worship; routine
Of reading Scriptures, chanting of hymns;
Tapas or mortifications keen
Or hacking to bits of body's limbs:
These we may do, yet there is nought
Compared to the One Name of Ram,
Which, Nanak says, we should ever psalm,
Made one with the Guru, our heart
and thought.

(2)

All over the nine mainlands of earth
A man may roam; longevity
Enjoy; shun life-indulgence, mirth,
And live in stern austerity;
Be burnt in sacrificial flames
Of self-mortification's fire;
Give gold and land and many a shire
And elephant and horse in alms;
Perform the Yogic exercises
And postures for body's purification,
Or follow the disciplined devices
Of Jainis for his Liberation;
Or he may get his body hacked
To tiny fragments bit by bit,
But thus shall not his ego flit
Whose soot within his veins is packed.
Nought is there in the universe
Which can stand equal to the Name;
Says Nanak, God-remembers
By Guru win their Freedom-aim.

(3)

At a holy place of man's desire,
If he were lucky to breathe his last,
Yet from his mind it cannot cast
Away his pride, vainglory dire.
All day and night ablutions' toil
And dips in sacred waters done,
Can wash not, from man's body, soil
Fouling his mind's interior zone.
Though he may with his body be
Engaged in various practices,
But this can make not his mind free
From down-seeped poison of sensuousness.
This body, most ephemeral,
He can with pints of water clean,
But how to cleanse the glassy wall,
Subtle, transparent sheet, unseen.
Glory of Hari's Name is so
Exalted, Nanak says, that those
Men who have been most fallen low,
Were saved beyond the world of woes.

(4)

The man who weaves ingenious webs
Of cleverness, him haunts death's fear,
Though he may ways of toil and tear
Follow, yet not sense-craving ebbs.
Wearing of many a saint-attire
Extinguishes not emotions' fire;
He may devise millions of ways,
God's Door thus comes not to his gaze.
He cannot escape from world, though leap
He may to heaven or chasm deep;
Infatuation has none spared,

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It keeps in Maya all ensnared.
Death-ghouls give him chastisement blows
Who nought but wicked actions knows;
They strike him furious whips as long
As sings not he great Gobind's song.
By Hari-Name's Remembrance go
All difficulty, grief and woe;
These humble words of Nanak sound
Upon the world this truth profound.

(5)

Those who seek happiness and bliss
Of the high heaven's world and this,
They should themselves give fervently
To service of the sages free.
Those who desire to root out, fling
Away their pain and agony,
They should in heart for ever sing
True Name of Hari devotedly.
He who longs for his glory, honour,
He should in company of saints
Disown vainglory, be true shunner
Of ego and its murky taints.
The man who dreads the circling round
Of births and deaths, let him protection
Seek of the sages who have found
The way to the worldly wheel's rejection.
My fervid heart, ecstatic limbs
Feel, Nanak says, a sacrifice
To thirsty souls whose longing flies
To serve the Lord and win his glimpse.

(6)

Of all men he is great, exalted,
Who has his swelling ego halted
And in the sages' company
Has cast off pride and vanity.
The man who deems himself as low
And keeps abased his lordly brow,
Consider him of all the men
As truly great and high of ken.
His mind who has made humble, meek,
Who deems himself feet-dust of all,
God's Name he sees in every speck
And bit of life, thing big or small.
All evils and malevolences
For good he has from mind removed,
The universe entire he senses
As beauteous form of the Beloved.
Who uninvolved and equal stays
In gay events or laughterless,
Indeed, such man is, Nanak says,
Beyond all sin or virtuousness.

(7)

Thy Name, O Lord Benevolent,
Alone is treasure for the poor;
To whom the world gives house nor tent.
Thy Name presents Protection-Door.
Thou art their haven, glory, honour
Who are low-placed, Thy love-beseechers;
Thou art alone the supreme Donor,
The one gift-giver of all the creatures.
Thou art the real Doer, who
Impellest all Thy Will to do.
Thou art the Knower of things, life-forms,
Life-moulds of beasts, of men or worms.
Thy law and movement but Thou knowest,
And all Thy vast world-governing,
Ever towards Thee turning, flowest
Thy Love, Self-loving, all-gathering.
Thy equal is Thyself alone,
Thy glory only Thou canst tell,
Says Nanak, save Thyself is none
Who can Thy greatness know full well.

(8)

Of all the acts of man that are,
His nature's law, or his soul's needs,
Singing of Hari's Name is far
More pure and noble than all deeds.
Of acts the most exalted action
Is casting off malevolence,
Perversity of mind and sense
By seeking the saints' near protection.
Of efforts most life-elevating,
The best, the noblest effort is
Ever on Hari meditating
While heart is full of ecstasies.
Of words that purify the soul
The word that's most ambrosial,
Is HARI, to be heard and sung
Repeatedly with rapturous tongue.
Of all the spots, the spot high-lifted
And most exalted, godly-gifted
Is that, — this verity Nanak tells, —
Where Hari Name's Light-presence dwells.

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SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

(Continued from the last issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Birbhajan, Kalyanji and Bechrobai

Birbhajan Siva, Bechro Bai Devi and Kalyanji Vishnu were the principal deities at Jamnagar. Birbhajan is a Lingam of Siva and has a spacious temple. Every evening many people of Jamnagar came to see Him. On several Mondays in Sravan (July-August) the sight of the huge quantity of various eatables offered to Him fills one with surprise. Such an offering to Mahadeva is not seen elsewhere. Words fail to describe the elaborate arrangement. The image of Kalyanji is of full stature and cut out of black stone. Visitors throng in large numbers in the morning.

Bechro Bai Devi has a small temple and Her image is also rather small. Every evening men and women gathered in Her yard and with heart full of devotion sang a prayer to Her. A line or two of that song was enough to rouse my feeling of devotion. The lines are :

Bechrō Bai Re.*
Hun jêbō na têbō chhun tomāro.

That is, Oh Bechro Bai, whatever I be, I am Yours.

The memory of this still fills my heart with a feeling of devotion which cannot be described in words.

Illness

The people of Kathiawad are accustomed to eating food cooked in an excessive quantity of ghee. They love to feed people with Churma and Laddu. Eating food with such an amount of ghee, I had dyspepsia. On learning this, Manisankarji prescribed '*Sarvopaghāta-samaniya-rasāyana*' (an Ayurvedic medicine) mentioned in *Susruta*, to be used by me for a month.

* * * *

* In Kathiawar men are addressed as Bhāi and old women as Bāi.

Bababhai Vaidya

At Dhanwantari Dham while I was taking '*Sarvopa-ghāta-samaniya-rasāyana*' as prescribed in *Susruta*, sometimes the famous Bababhai Vaidya, court physician of the Maharana of Udaipur, advised me to take his medicine prepared with gold in preference to drugs made of paltry vegetables.

He was a famous physician, fond of mercuric preparations. He cured incurable cases by administering mercuric drugs. I could not comply with his request as I could find no mention of mercuric medicines in Charaka and Sushruta. Those authorities mention the use of metals like iron, gold, pyrites, etc., and of the compound red oxide of arsenic. The very name 'Rasendra Chintamani' is comparatively modern. It is largely used in books on Ayurveda. It is a Tantrika treatise. Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray speaks of Nagarjuna as the best chemist of old.

To Shethji's house

Manisankarji spoke of himself as Raseswaracharya. Every day he would worship a Lingam made of mercury. He held mercury in great veneration and called it Brahman. In these four months I finished reading *Charaka* and *Sushruta* with him. I also read parts of *Vagbhat* and *Bhāvaprakāsa*.

After I had been there two or three months Shankarji Sheth (banker) used to come to me. He was famous for his wealth and munificence. As a result of my taking for a month medicine prescribed by Sushruta I had become weak. On seeing that he took me to his home. There for about four months I was given rice and milk at noon and only milk at night.....

For my sake Shethji would keep a cow in his house. He fed me with its milk.

Let me give some particulars about Shankarji Sheth. He was a householder, a Var-

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nawrā Nāgar Brahman. The Varnawra Nagars are generally good looking and have a fair complexion. Shethji had a tall frame with arms reaching the knees.

When I came to him he was a widower with no child. Two nephews, two nieces and a widowed sister-in-law were the sole heirs of his wealth.

As I stayed there for some time I marked that Shethji had a very old good-looking mother for whom nobody cared. She would wash with her own hands her coarse cloths. Every one in the house had a personal servant but the old mother had none. I was thinking of interceding for the uncared mother when one day the old lady, while wringing her cloth, had a bad fall. On that day I said to Shethji 'You are so wealthy, you have so many people in the house, why should your old mother be in such a sad plight? Such a thing you will not find in our part of the country.' I told him of Bengalees devoted to the mother. 'Here at our place,' said Shethji, 'nobody takes any care of the mother when one has got a wife. It is surely a bad custom. Please advise me what I should do.' 'You will bow down every day,' said I, 'at the feet of your mother and ask her wish.' Shethji did so, but the old lady would give no reply. While bowing down Shethji placed a four anna bit at the feet of his mother. The old lady was thankful to me but others in the house were displeased.

Shethji's daily routine

Everyday Shethji would leave his bed before day-break, have his bath in tepid water and sit to worship. A paid Brahman would come to help him in his worship. After his morning service and worship of Siva he would read three chapters of the Chandi and the Gita and with flowers, bel leaves and tulasi leaves go, with that Brahman as his companion, to pay a visit to Birbhajan and Kalyanji.

On return from the temples he would sit in his parlour to do japam with a rosary of one thousand tulasi beads. At this time he would meet the visitors and give money to those who came to beg. Then began his daily work. There would be no break in this routine.

Although he had an almshouse (sadavrata) and beggars received alms at his house, many Brahmans sat to dine with him. Sanyasis and beggars had never to leave his house with empty hands.

For my diversion Shethji appointed a Brahman, known to Swami Vivekananda, to sing me songs. His name was Mulji. While travelling in Kathiawad, Swamiji, in a big village, very much liked to hear from his lips the famous songs like '*Dayanidhe teri gati lakhi na pare*' and '*Prabhu mero awaguna chita na dharo*' of the poet devotee Suradas and particularly '*Sasadhara tilaka bhala Ganga jata-para*' in the morning.

At Shethji's house

At Shethji's house I used to read till two in the night. He then used to force me to stop.

While there one day suddenly Nityaswarup Brahmachari made his appearance and told me that at Karachi he had made acquaintance with Swamis Brahmananda and Turiyananda and having heard from them about me had come over to Jamnagar. I made up for his wants of clothes and other things and sent him to his destination. This Nityaswarup Brahmachari afterwards published an edition of *Srimad Bhagavata* with some commentaries.

At that time I took every day salted coffee in a small wooden cup. The Arabs love to take it and the prince of this place had many Arab servants.

By and by Shethji became much attached to me. In preference to his nephews he would take me in his coach in the afternoon. This became unbearable to them.

Shethji's relations were ill-disposed towards me and on top of it there occurred an incident. One day Shethji had gone out to the temples when there came a Sanyasi as a guest. When the Sanyasi requested to be fed, the almoner refused him, saying, 'Already there is a Sanyasi who is fed here, you cannot be admitted.' I got offended at this conduct of the servant and went out saying, 'I won't have

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my meal here.' On coming back I found the Sanyasi seated by Shethji. I was very glad. 'You would not dine here, you said,' said he, 'so I would like to dine with him.' Shethji had formed the habit that unless there was a Sanyasi with him he would not sit to dine.

As I told him of the servant, Shethji took him to task. 'Even if as many as forty Sanyasis do come,' said he, 'don't send them off. By the grace of God food is not wanting in my home.'

This incident increased the displeasure of Shethji's relatives. When Shethji appointed the famous singer Mulji to sing me Bhajans (devotional songs) their anger knew no bounds.

In the meantime, as my vow of Chaturmasya had come to an end, I should no more stay with a householder. Over and above that, I marked that Shethji's attachment to me had increased and I had incurred the displeasure of his relations.

I told Shethji of my intention to move off elsewhere. He burst into tears and took hold of my feet. 'I shall write to Swami Brahmananda, the abbot of your monastery,' said he, 'I shall make him permit you to stay here. I shall build a temple for Sri Ramakrishna Deva and arrange for his daily worship.' *

I was afraid. I had foresaken my parents and my family and had come out for God. Should I after all be bound by attachment to this gentleman? I made up my mind to steal away at night without bidding farewell to Shethji. But Shethji was down with fever and in a delirium was praying to me plaintively. My heart melted, I could not leave before he came round. I stayed on to attend upon Shethji.

Poisoning

At Jamnagar I used to take coffee daily. One day, after Shethji had come round, I was taking coffee. That day it tasted very pungent and an oily something was on it. I thought somebody had put his hand covered with particles of spice into the water and it had somehow come in contact with ghee, which is very largely used here. I did not mention it to anyone but took as many as four cups of it. After sometime I had repeated motions. The whole day long this continued and for four days I could not stir out. Jhandubhat Viththalji gave me medicines.

After some days when Shethji had recovered, I stole away to the house of Jhandu Bhatji. There I said, 'I will not go back to Shethji's place.' 'Rightly resolved,' said Bhatji with joy, 'I have heard that there they are hatching a plot to poison you. As there were many around when I came to see you, I could give you no hint of it.' I could not believe this.

But the next day as I came to Shethji's place to take away my clothes I saw that Shethji was only weeping on his bed. In a single day he had grown pale. I consoled him saying, 'I shall stay in this town and we shall meet constantly.' 'Your coffee-set reminds me,' said he, 'that you are leaving me and I cannot be consoled. Never more will you take your coffee here. Have a cup today.'

Coffee was brought. How is this! That same pungent drink with oil floating on the surface. I took just a sip and ran straight to Jhandu Bhat's house. Forthwith I had a motion. Hearing the details from me, Jhandu Bhatji said, 'I told you nothing regarding the incident of the first day. There was croton seed with coffee in your cup.' I refused to be convinced. At last Bhatji had a croton seed brought. As my tongue touched it I could no more disbelieve his statement. But the very slight contact caused purging even that day.

'Shethji would go by your word,' said Bhatji, 'for your service he spared no money. Over and above that there was the proposal for building a temple. Lest Shethji should squander all his wealth for your sake, they attempted to remove you from this world altogether.'

(To be continued.)

* Afterwards when Swami Vivekananda heard of this, he said, "You should rather have accepted the offer. We could have had a nice institution there."

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चरैवेति

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

(Glimpses of Early Life)

Indian tradition has always laid greater emphasis upon the *principles* of religion and philosophy than upon the *persons* who revealed or expounded them. Thus it matters little to the sincere aspirant whether Angiras and Saunaka or Krishna and Arjuna were real 'historical' characters or, even if they were, whether the incidents of their lives were precisely those described in our extant literature. The reason for such an attitude of mind is quite simple: What we are expected to do is to fix our attention on the disciplines and the goals pointed out. We are to stand on our own legs, systematically purify our personality, and bring it to the point where the truths taught in the scriptures become reflected in it. Hearing from another, whether it be from an individual or from a book, is only second hand evidence. It can take us a little forward. But our progress will be complete only when our inside is fully opened up and illumined. Says Swami Vivekananda in his Rajayoga lectures: 'Thus will we come to the basis of belief, the real genuine religion. We will perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether there is a God in the universe or none.' 'If there is a God, we must see Him; if there is a soul we must perceive it; otherwise it is better not to believe.' In the ultimate resort, principles become accepted not because the person who proclaimed them deserves to be respected, but because our own sincere and sustained quest has made us realize them in our own life.

With this background the Indian mind can easily appreciate the stand taken by the author of *Mystic Rebels* when he writes: 'It matters little whether we are asked to regard Pythagoras as a historical personality or as a personified school of thought.' What is pertinent is only this: 'For five hundred years from the Golden Age of Hellas' right to the rise of the Roman empire, the creed of Pythagoras 'remained the faith of the thinking elite.' It is related of him that he was 'a man of noble birth and godlike beauty' and that he 'spent the first sixty years of his life in travelling through the whole of the then known world, absorbing all the secret lore of the Orient, to communicate it to the Occident.'

As for Pythagorean thought, it 'filtered and purified the diverse rites and cults that, from time to time, became fashionable' in those ancient days. Great reformers arose, later, to synthesize these elements into 'a whole of remarkable wisdom, purity and ethical teaching.' Among them the greatest was Apollonius of Tyana. What was told of the historicity of Pythagoras applies equally to this philosopher as well. To quote only one important argument advanced by Dr Schnur: 'Even the first Christian opponent of Apollonius, Eusebius, never goes so far as to deny his existence: he merely criticises the admittedly inconvenient miracles ascribed to him.'

* * * *

Here is a miracle to begin with. It is about the very birth of Apollonius. It is said that the Egyptian God, Proteus, 'made annunciation to his mother' that the child to be born to her would resemble him. And when the time for delivery came near, she went to lie down in a 'flowery meadow', in obedience to a dream. There certain swans, sacred to Apollo, made their appearance and, 'by their harsh screams, precipitated his birth'!

Apollonius is believed to have lived from about 3 B.C. to 97 of the present era. We are told that he had the benefit of the best education possible for the 'upper classes of the time.' It is not an education that 'cram-

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med' the child's mind with 'unrelated facts' but trained him in the ways of 'cogent thinking' and created in him the 'thirst for knowledge.' In Tarsus he must have come into contact with 'Jewish monotheism'. Later he was sent to a college in Aegae, 'attached to the temple of Asclepius', the 'patron saint of medicine.' It was here that he was attracted to the philosophy of Pythagoras. His teacher was one who 'by no means practised what he preached.' 'He was only a sign-post, indicating the right way, but remaining stationary.' Fifteen year old Apollonius, however, decided to 'live the life of Pythagoras' in right earnest. He ate pure vegetarian food, walked barefoot, and wore garments of linen, — 'the earth-wool that does not deprive living creatures of their covering.' He also practised contemplation and other allied exercises laid down in the creed. He became a centre of attraction by his handsome commanding presence as well as by his wisdom.

The priests of the temple were experienced physicians and many patients went to them to make their offerings and to get themselves cured. Young Apollonius' attitude toward the manner of cures can be seen from the following recorded instance: A young gluttonous Assyrian suffered from dropsy and consulted Apollonius. The sage advised him not to expect divine help. He was told: 'You load heavy meals in your water-logged and worn-out stomach, choking water with a flood of mud!' If people sought forgiveness of sins or healing of their ailments through 'offerings' to the gods, the reaction of Apollonius was to say that gods cannot be bribed 'in favour of the wicked, and man need not enumerate his wishes in prayer.' The only right prayer would be: 'Grant unto me that which I deserve'!

For four years Apollonius lived in the temple, absorbing the best in the teachings of priests and philosophers. Dr Schnur adds that here the young man must have first heard of the wise men of India. 'Nearly three hundred years before, Buddhist missionaries had travelled from India to the realms of the Diadochs who had inherited Alexander's empire. One such mission had visited Syria, and nothing is more likely than that the college of priests in Aegae, so close to Syria, should have preserved some faint recollection' of Buddhism, — 'a wise and gentle creed, one that rejected intolerance, violence and bloodshed and enabled its adepts to achieve by the power of mind things that must appear miraculous to the uninitiated.' *

To get a proper perspective, we have to forget modern political and religious features of nations, and take a good understanding look at the movements of ideas a few centuries before the birth of Jesus.

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

* What we have given here is a faithful summary of the relevant sections of *Mystic Rebels*, published by The Beechhurst Press, New York.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article of Sri U. N. Chatterji of Gorakhpur University is the text of a lecture delivered by him on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at Gorakhpur on March 29, 1960.

Miss Mohini Nakra is from New Delhi.

Sri S. N. Rao of Ooty is a retired Deputy Collector.

Sri S. Subrahmanya Iyer from Madanapallee, Andhra, is a writer of several books.

Sri K. B. Sitaramayya is Lecturer in English, Annamalai University.

Sri Umesh Talukdar is from Assam.

Sri S. Subhash Chandra is from the Department of Philosophy, University College of Arts, Hyderabad.

Sri Harkrishan Singh is from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

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A VANISHING INSTITUTION

Modern India is in travail. A confusion of values, a loss of a sense of direction is what is quite evident. It is true about all the members of the society, young and old. But its effect is more clear on the younger sections of the community. Various efforts that should be made are being talked of. Supplying the spiritual outlook on life along with the cultivation of social virtues is generally recognized to be essential. The recognition of the spiritual values in younger days is useful not merely for inculcating the social virtues of goodness, honesty, fellow-feeling and the like. It is useful also for happiness, peace and spiritual progress of the individual. In fact, in the field of individual life and action the value of spiritual outlook is felt to be supreme. A long range view of things develops restraint, patience and other virtues. Search for higher verities, for a purpose of life and action is innate in man. Some time or other it is sure to assert on the mind of man. Fixing a stable goal of life will give stability and strength in the life itself. The method adopted in acquiring the goods of life also must be as much in tune with the goal as possible. The ideal and method of the aspirations in youth should be such that they do not go against those in later age. Human mind is not capable of frequent changes. If the joys of earlier days must not mar the peace of old age, they must be interlinked, for the same individual mind continues through the different stages of life. A spiritual outlook on life can give a unity to the life and its aspirations. Herein lies its importance. The method adopted by men with such an outlook will be satisfying till the end. So it is essential that we cultivate this outlook early in life. There may be various approaches to it. But the widely practised and the unobtrusive method is the cultivation of love of God. This can be done best by coming in touch with a holy life and atmosphere. Atmosphere has a great effect on human mind. Visiting holy shrines, temples and holy men are resorted to with this purpose. In olden days we developed a system of having private shrines in every home. Religion ultimately is private and individualistic, an intimate relation of man to his creator. No external agencies are necessary so much as the innate longing of the soul. Its supreme necessity was recognized by all the religious schools, and it became a common thing in practically every home. A home shrine provides a sanctuary to the spiritual soul, a congenial atmosphere surcharged with spiritual forces, where he can meditate upon the eternal verities in deep silence, instead of going away from the noisy environment. A reserved place for meditation and worship creates instantly a sense of deep reverence and love for God. With such an attitude well developed he finds that he can retire into himself and need not run for excitements for refreshment, for the eternal refreshment of the soul becomes his. But nowadays owing to the upsetting of social patterns, growth of city and industrial life where men are huddled in congested houses this grand system is dying away. The home shrine is an institution in itself, which can influence the thoughts and ideas of all the members of the family, from a child that is born that day to an old man that will die tomorrow. For seriously religious people its importance is great. But for generality of people too it is very useful. It is not that because they are often looked upon as masses they are fully soulless and materialistic. Man by nature, says the Vedanta, is divine. Only that divinity is to be manifested in human character. This manifestation will be easy and spontaneous if a small shrine is maintained in every home, where all the members of the family spend some time in prayer, contemplation and thought of God. We need not speak too much of the social virtues that will come as by-products. It is enough if it gives a direction to life and sweetens it. More money may be spent in worship by a whole community but a little money spent for the small place reserved for the Lord will give, we are sure,

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tenfold spiritual results. It will be socially beneficial too. Of course, housing is a great problem in the cities, especially for lower middle class and still poorer sections of people. It is not easy to suggest a satisfying solution when they are to change their house every now and then. But if the members know the great usefulness of this institution, it will not be given up in callousness and neglect. We do hope the builders of homelife will understand the supreme utility of it for individual and family life and try to maintain it in their respective homes.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

JAPA: By M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Pages 41. Price Rs. 2.

This nice booklet gives a succinct treatment of the Science and Practice of Mantra-Japa as a valuable adjunct to Spiritual Sadhana for controlling the mind and subduing its Vasanas.

Introducing the efficacy of chanting the Mother's Name, the learned author explains the precise meaning and rationale of the practice of Japa as it helps to set up appropriate vibrations and create the subtler mental atmosphere that is necessary for the perception of the deeper truths of Spiritual experience.

In developing the theme, the author examines the conditions of Cosmic creation due to the impact of the Primal Sound Energy on the rarefied spaces between heaven and earth and points out the function of Japa or sustained repetition of holy words and syllables in directing the mind to turn inward and seek the very source of this primal energy or *Sabda-Brahman* that manifests the presence and power of *Para-Brahman* or the Supreme Spirit known as God.

A valuable feature of the publication is the collection of select Vedic Mantras like *Gayatri* and *Tryambaka* and their translation into beautiful English which preserves undiminished the spirit and potency of the original.

A special section on Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri forms the concluding part of the book, and presents a fresh approach to meditation on the Light Celestial through the grace and benediction of Mother Savitri. यस्य वाक्यं स ऋषि:, या तेनोच्यते सा देवता :— says Aswalayana in his Smrithi-Sara. The Seer who sees the Mantra through the grace of the Devata and gives it articulate utterance is known as the Rishi. The Savitri Mantra that is extracted below is the inspired utterance of Maharshi Aurobindo and condenses the profoundest experience of the Upanishadic Seers :—

तत् सवितुर्वरं रूपं ज्योति: परस्य धीमहि ।
यन्न: सत्येन दीपयेत् ॥

K. PANCHAPAGESAN

GURU RAMANA-VACHANA-MALA: By 'WHO'. Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai. Pp. 72, Price Re, 1.00.

This is a free English rendering of Poet Muruganar's *Guru Vachakakovai* (in Tamil) which records the Teaching of the Great Sage Sri Ramana of Arunachala. The Poet has been a life-long seeker at the Feet of the Sage and has had opportunities to receive and imbibe the spirit of this sadhana of Self-Quest as will be evident to anyone going through these pages of earnest exposition.

Divided into three chapters, *Discrimination*, *Quest* and *Experience*, the book touches upon a number of topics constituting the Philosophy and the Sadhana of the Maharshi. Stress is laid on the practical aspect of the matter and there are very useful hints to the aspirant. A ripeness of mind, a certain maturity of the being is required of one who would tread the difficult path. He should have zeal for the Truth of life and he must apply himself with diligence to seek the Source of his world in the depths of his heart. This he cannot do by dint of his personal effort alone. It is the Grace that draws him to the Centre within. Indeed, 'If God — who is in the Heart — does not draw the mind inwards by the might of His Grace, who can attain Peace by diving into the Heart, by the mere power of his own mind, which is treacherous?' (P. 24)

Of course the individual also has his own contribution to make: devotion, discrimination, aspiration and application. It is pleasing to note that there is here no opposition between the

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markata-bhava and the *marjara-bhava*, the way of the monkey (self-effort) and the way of the cat (self-surrender). It is pointed out that both are necessary, the former in the earlier stages when the ego-sense is still strong and the latter after a sufficient purity of motive and intensity of devotion is developed. All the while, the Guru plays the leading role; his help and his *anugraha* truly fashion the destiny of the *sadhaka*. (P. 30-31).

A book of worth with a direct appeal.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE: By Richard B. Gregg. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pages 228. Price Rs. 2.50.

In this small book the author has made a classic and perceptive study of the non-violent methods of resistance. The book explains the enigmatical effects of the Gandhian Satyagraha method — the method which uses the Force of Truth.

There are eleven chapters followed by the notes by chapters. The author has done well to commence the book with abundant modern examples where the method of non-violence was employed with success. The first chapter besides impressing on the reader the efficacy and power of the method makes him become more interested in the details of the method. The following chapters explain to the reader how the method operates and works with success in solving differences and disputes of varied nature both in cases of individuals and organised groups of people. The emotional, mental and moral mechanisms involved in the process have been explained in the light of modern psychology. Emphatic stress has been laid on the fact that when people equipped with moral rectitude, equanimity of demeanour and full command of nerves offer a non-violent resistance, the method results in the sure success of the resisters, has a creative and constructive effect in reforming the opponents and produces an everlasting solution to any problem. The chapter on 'Persuasion' is highly impressive and inspiring. The author at every stage has taken utmost care in presenting the reader the clear comparison and contrast of the non-violent and violent methods of attack. After emphasizing the need for training, the author proceeds to the last chapter to explain the effective methods of achieving the required discipline and organisation of the method. The notes by chapters provided at the end will be of great use to the readers.

The book has made its appearance at a time when the world is threatened with global tensions and is facing a perilous suspense. In these days of mounting indiscipline and insecurity depression and dejection and chaos and confusion, the people with their abysmal ignorance are in search of a new method to settle their differences and disputes. The only method seems to be the Gandhian method of non-violence because as Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall puts it, 'If the contribution of violence (i.e. military operations) to the settlement of differences of opinions or conflicts between sovereign States has evolved to such intensity that it is totally destructive, has not violence outlived its usefulness in disputes between large States?' The method of non-violence can be practised only by people of integrity and intrepidity and not by people of priggishness and pusillanimity. The method is unifying and not separative; creative and not destructive and peaceful and not pugnacious. It recognises the dignity of the human beings and results in an everlasting harmony and peace.

The book deserves to be read by one and all so that it will be a source of inspiration and guidance to all to create a new world order full of peace, pleasure and prosperity.

V. V. JAYARAMAN.

MY MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH BAPU: By Manubehn Gandhi. Translated by Arvindh Sheth. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 48. Price 50 nP.

This is an ideal book to present our children with, and it holds the mirror up to the ever inspiring personality of the Mahatma, which had many facets, very like those of our mythological heroes. The 26 anecdotes assembled here by his granddaughter, reveal something new and something out of the ordinary about the great man, which as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has so aptly mentioned in the foreword, rise to levels which are beyond human reach.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

CIVILISATION OR CHAOS: By Irene Conybeare. Chetana Ltd., 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1. Pages. 247. Price Rs. 10.50.

Here is an unusual book written by a lady who has had her own spiritual awakening in the circumstances of her dear father's death causing her a great mental shock. Her analysis of the malady affecting humanity today and her specific for its cure all sound quite peculiarly the result of a mind that is on the path of divining both the cause and solution for eradication of a virulent disease in society. In nearly thirteen chapters, the entire thesis of hers finds its expression in a

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manner likely to interest persons who feel rudderless on the stormy seas of the present day conflicts and confusions.

STAY WITH GOD: By Francis Brabazon. Garuda Books, Cl-Le Page, 77, Castlereagh St., Sydney, NSW, Australia. Pages 166. Price Rs. 10.

Meher Baba is the one object of adoration to this poet who has, from cover to cover, in this volume of 155 pages of beautiful print, poured out his heart in free verse. Though there is much inlaid in the poetry of this author by way of serious thought, there is also an apparent influence of the New Ideologies of Meher Baba. The notes appended towards the last few pages add certainly to the reader's clearer understanding of the lines so copiously running throughout the volume.

C.

PICTORIAL HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: By Dagobert D. Runes. (Philosophical Library, New York.) Pages. 406. Price $ 15.00

'Here, in vivid pictures and illuminating text', says the letter press on the jacket to this book, 'are more than three thousand years of world philosophy. From Socrates to Sujuki, .. from the Upanishads to the Existentialists ... from Moses to Einstein ... this fascinating pictorial survey embraces the major schools of philosophy, famous books of wisdom, and great major thinkers of both East and West'. This book provides an encyclopaedic vision of the course of philosophic thought in the world pertaining to all countries. Each thinker is represented by his picture or photograph accompanied by a brief account of his life and the main features of his thought. We agree with the publishers that 'this is the first time that such likenesses, traditional, artistic and photographic have been assembled in one volume'. These reproductions help to visualise the great thinkers, mystics and scientists of all ends and produce in the reader a sense of real and personal acquaintance with each of them. The subject matter has been arranged both countrywise and in the sequence of periods.

In the section entitled '*At the Cradle of Indian Thought*', the author has the following: 'Much of the philosophy of India was misunderstood, misinterpreted and misused by superstitious beliefs and a fantastic religious misconstruction of metaphysical concepts. Self-denial became self-abuse; pan-animation became childish, animal reincarnation; and the holiness of spiritual resignation was turned into a beggar's paradise'. We do not know what period or phase of Indian thought the author has in mind; but, this is far too sweeping a statement to make which does little credit to the lofty heights of Indian philosophy which is so superficially summarised bordering on caricature. The author is inclined to believe that Gautama Buddha is the representative philosopher of the country. In passing, we may remark that the pictures of the 'Forehead Marks of the Four Main Castes of India' on page 46 is a travesty which has no semblance of truth. One wonders wherefrom the author got the idea and its pictorial representation. It is not correct to say as the author does on page 52 that Shankara 'denied the relevance of caste and lineage'. To put this absolutely without reference to the context in which it has to be understood will create a very wrong impression. It is again wrong to say (p. 57) that 'Sri Ramakrishna ... founded numerous Vedanta study societies in the West'. It was Swami Vivekananda that carried the message of Vedanta to the New World. These observations, however, do not detract from our admiration of the stupendous labour and research that has gone into the making of this work in which the reader has the rare opportunity of 'meeting' the glorious galaxy of great thinkers of the world down the corridors of time.

P. SANKARANARAYANAN.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA: A simple paraphrase in English. By S. Parthasarathy Iyengar, B.A.,B.L. Published by the Gnana Vignana Trust, Gautamasramam, 3, Peyalwar Koil St., Madras-5. Pages 138. Price Rs. 2.50.

The book under notice is an excellent narration in English of the Bhagavad Gita — the song supreme. The spirit of yoga in each of the chapters is well brought out.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

FROM LOG CABIN TO WHITE HOUSE: By R. K. Dalal. 'Pallav' Garden Colony, Andheri, Bombay. Pages 84.

The book under review is a fine condensation of the life-history of James Garefield, President of the United States of America. It is a telling tale of the triumph of will to do hard work and the fulfilment of an ambition of a poor farmer's lad to be something in his life. With sincerity, truthfulness and conscentious application of heart and head, he reached beyond his own expectations after a stiff struggle for existence. The motherly affection has been a source of inspiration and solace, but for which he would have been a crippled soldier in his life-battle. The

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long and short of it, the life of James Garefield is a source of enlightenment and proof to many pessimists of life. The language is a treat to the English loving public.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

MARATHI

YOGA SANGRAM: By Shekh Mahamad Baba Shrigondekar, Edited by Shri W. S. Bendre, Published by P. P. H. Book Stall, Bombay-4. Pp. 242, Price Rs. 6.

Shekh Mahamad Baba was a great saint and Philosopher of Maharashtra and he has presented his philosophy in the book 'Yoga Sangram' in a poetic form. Though he was a Mohammedan he was very well acquainted with Vedanta Philosophy. He has expressed his views based on Vedanta, in Marathi language with which he was thoroughly conversant as is evident from the sweetness of his poetic diction. Shri W. S. Bendre has taken great pains in bringing to light the inspiring and the ennobling philosophy of this great Saint of Maharashtra.

The very name of the book connotes the internal spiritual struggle for the attainment of the Supreme Goal of Life, namely, the realization of oneness of Soul with God or the Divine Reality which is the Ultimate Cause of the Universe. The present book contains eighteen chapters which deal with various spiritual and ethical topics. Shekh Mahamad Baba has given a detailed and graphic description of the internal warfare between the divine and the demoniac forces which torment the heart of a spiritual aspirant when he passes through the dark night of the soul. He has delineated this internal struggle lucidly and in attractive manner, giving appropriate quotations from the Koran as well as the Gita and other Hindu scriptures.

Shri W. S. Bendre, who has edited this book, has really enriched Marathi Literature by the publication of this valuable philosophy which will be appreciated both by the Hindu and the Mohammedan readers.

S. V.

HINDI

SRI VALMIKI RAMAYAN DARSHAN: Discourses of Sastri P. B. Athavle in Gujarati, compiled by Sri Rupnarayan K. Sharma, B.A., LL.B., Published by Sri Tatvajnan Vidyapith, Thana, Bombay. Pages 248. Price Rs. 2.

The book under review is a collection in Hindi of the lectures of Sri P. B. Athavle delivered in Gujarati during the year 1953. It deals with the literary and cultural treasures of the *magnum opus* of Sage Valmiki. There are interesting chapters on the administrative, political, social, personal and educational conditions of the Ram Rajya age. The characteristic sketches of the personae are marked with realistic touches of human emotion and feelings.

The language of the compiler is very simple and lucid, supported by good expressions of thought. The book is worth a place in every library.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

UTTAR PRADESH KA SAMSKRITIC PARICAY (Cultural history of the Uttara Pradesh): By Sri Krishna Datta Vajpeyi, M.A., P.E.S., Published by the Shivalay Agarwal & Co., Booksellers and Publishers, Agra. Pages 104. Price Rs. 2.50.

The book under notice brings out succinctly the cultural heritage of the Uttara Pradesh. The book has been divided into 12 chapters dealing with the ancient age upto the present age. The cultural growth of the province has been traced stage by stage in every age and is well borne by facts and illustrations. The religious, philosophic, artistic, literary and social aspects of the culture of a country has been well explained. The author's manner of treatment and presentation leaves for us nothing to desire. Books of the type deserve praise and encouragement as a detailed estimation of places of our country enable us to assess the heritage of our country more minutely. The book is well got up and is illustrated with 27 picture plates.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANSKRIT

SRI VEDAPADA STAVA OF JAIMINI. Pp. vi, 91, ii. Re. 1.25.

SRI SKANDA VEDAPADA STAVA. P. xxix, 47. Re. 1. Both edited by P. N. Sivaramakrishnayya. Pub. Sri Sringeri Mutt, Sringeri (Mysore).

Special sanctity is attached to the class of hymns called *Vedapada Stavas* which have for their last foot part of a Vedic *mantra*. Several such hymns are available, on Skanda, Tripurasundari, Dattatreya, Sri Rama, the best known among them being on Lord Siva at Chidambaram by Sage Jaimini. This last and *Skanda Vedapada Stava* are now issued by the Sringeri Mutt with translations in English and Tamil. Sri P. N. Sivaramakrishnayya who has edited and translated the works, has added to the

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editions informative Introductions dealing with the significance, nature and source of the hymns, their peculiarities and importance, and the greatness of the deities they praise. The editor has also traced the *mantras* which form the last foot of the verses and has given their reference.

Efficacious and suited for daily *parayana*, these editions will be thankfully received by the *astika* public. The books are well got-up and neatly printed, but there occur a good number of spelling mistakes which the editor should take care to correct in the next edition.

RAMADASAM (laghu-kavya) : Pp. 23. nP. 75.

POORNAPATRAM (Collected Poems). Pp. v, 60. Re. 1. Both by Sannidhanam Suryanarayana Sastri, Sanskrit Lecturer, Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddi Women's College, Hyderabad.

Couched in simple Sanskrit verse, these two books of Sri Suryanarayana Sastri, a writer in Telugu and Sanskrit, characterise the revival of Sanskrit writing during the last few years. The first work, *Ramadasam*, in about a hundred verses, recounts the story of Saint Ramadasa, the pious officer of the Sultan of Bijapur who built the Sri Rama shrine at Bhadrachalam out of State funds, and how, when imprisoned by the Sultan, he was redeemed by the Lord in person.

The second book *Poornapatram* is a collection of shorter pieces in three parts: the first is a rendering into Sanskrit of twenty parables of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the second a few legendary stories and some picturesque portrayals of nature, and the third, the poet's musings of a mystical nature in which are found some thought-provoking trends reminiscent of Tagore's *Gitanjali*.

Written in chaste Sanskrit, the books deserve the notice of all Sanskrit lovers and the author deserves our congratulations for his efforts in this field.

KANNADA KAVYA TARANGINI : KUVEMPU TARANGAH : Poems by 'Kuvempu' rendered into Sanskrit by C. G. Purushottama, Lecturer in Sanskrit, Maharaja's College, Mysore. Jaya Maruti Publishers, 2269/1, Vinoba Rd., V. V. Mohalla, Mysore-2. Pp. xiv, 112. Rs. 2.

'Kuvempu' (Dr. K. V. Puttappa, till recently Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University) is one of the honoured names among modern Kannada poets, and his poems are marked for their spiritual flair, breadth of vision and, above all, depth of sincerity. The book reviewed is a rendering of twentynine of Kuvempu's Kannada poems on diverse topics rendered into Sanskrit. Besides being admirably faithful to the original, the renderings are set in the same metre, which forms the significant feature of these translations. The adoption of indigenous metres for Sanskrit poetry opens out a fertile avenue for the progress of Sanskrit writing, a method pioneered by Mathuranatha Sastri of Jaipur in *Jayapura Vaibhava* and *Sahitya Vaibhava*.

K. V. SARMA.

OBITUARY : BHAKTARAJ MAHARAJ

We are sorry to announce that Swami Sadashivanandaji passed away on 9th July 1960 at 10-15 a.m. at Kashi Sevasram. His body was immersed in the Holy Ganges, at Manikarnika Ghat.

His earlier name was Harinath. He was well known as Master Mashai at Allahabad. Sri Harinath Ohdeddar was a teacher in Anglo-Bengalee School (Alld.). He was a nephew of Dr Ohdeddar, first Civil Surgeon of U.P.

He was initiated by Swami Vivekananda at Benares in 'Soudhabas', Kedar Ghat in 1901 at the age of 22. He was a friend and co-worker of Charu Babu, Swami Shubhananda, the founder of Kashi Sevasram.

He took Sannyas in 1920 from Brahmananda Maharaj along with Kedar Baba, Charu Babu and others.

For forty years he lived the life of a Parivrajaka and has got a large number of devotees among the residents of U.P.

On February 10th he went to Kedar Ghat for the last time where he had many old memories of Swami Vivekananda. He slipped and sustained a fracture which confined him to bed. He expired at the ripe age of 81.

The name 'Bhaktaraj' was a nick-name which was given to him by Swami Vivekananda for his Vaishnava attitude.

For twenty years he lived with Swami Vijnananandaji of Allahabad where he founded the Brahmavadin Club along with a few friends of his.

A few years ago he visited South India and highly impressed all those who came in touch with him.

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NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, NEW DELHI

Report for 1959

Lectures, religious classes, and celebrations of birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other teachers formed important features of the activity of the centre. It runs a Library and Reading Room, a general Out-door Dispensary and a free Tuberculosis Clinic. During the year under review the Dispensary treated 52,011 cases of which 13,527 were new ones. The clinic treated 114,650 of which 2,006 were new cases. 459 in-door cases were treated of which 223 were women.

The Library had 11,591 books, 14 newspapers and 132 periodicals, 11,391 books were issued in 1958. The Sarada Mahila Samiti started in the Mission premises a Sarada Mandir, which is a spiritual and moral education class for children. It had 100 children on its roll. The management thank the donors and other friends for their kind co-operation.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Birthday Anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda

The Ninety-eighth tithipuja of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji Maharaj was observed on the 21st July, 1960 in the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. The function started with Arati in the Shrine followed by singing by devotees. Select portions from the Gita and the Upanishads were chanted by the boys of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, and Durga-saptasati and Gita by the Sadhus. In the Shrine elaborate worship was performed along with Arati and Homa. Nearly 1,000 devotees attended the function and took prasad. About 500 Daridra-narayanas were also fed

In the evening after service in the Shrine and a little singing and reading, Swami Sambuddhanandaji, President, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bombay spoke in English about Swami Ramakrishnanandaji to the gathered devotees.

On 24th July '60 the Public Celebration started at 5-30 p.m. with Swami Sambuddhanandaji in the chair.

Sri P. Ramakrishnan, I.C.S. spoke in English. He elaborately dealt with the special features of the life of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji giving suitable quotations about Guru-bhakti, discipline, importance of ritualistic worship and the necessity of the cult of Personality in religious pursuit—all of which were stressed by Sasi Maharaj. He dealt with the latter's life dividing it into three parts of service to Sri Ramakrishna, spiritual preparation through worship and spreading the ideas living the life and through his writings and lectures.

Sri S. Y. Subramaniyam, Lecturer, Vivekananda College, addressed the gathering in mellifluent Tamil and finely narrated the Guru-bhakti of Sasi Maharaj.

Swami Sambuddhanandaji in course of his presidential address in English spoke about his harmonious development of devotion, knowledge and action, the three aspects of sadhana prescribed in the scriptures. Sasi Maharaj was veritably the Triveni of these three spiritual disciplines and realizations. He was a hard taskmaster to the young novices to whose lives he was expected to give a shape but he was all sweetness to others who visited the Math. As by piercing the shell of a king-cocoanut one can have his hunger and thirst quenched, so also within his seemingly unwelcome exterior one could discover love and sweetness in abundance and improve one's spiritual stature.

With Sri K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer, M.L.C., proposing a vote of thanks, the function came to a close.

CORRECTION

In 'Hymn Unto Vishnu' (in the July issue) please read जलजारि for जलजासि and disc for sword (in verse II. 41. p. 147); in I. 20 रत्नौघ for रत्नौप; in I. 5 भ्रुवौ for भ्रुवो. Also read चक्र disc in place of शङ्ख conch in II. 1.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII | SEPTEMBER 1960 | No. 5

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna was in the happiest mood with his young and pure-souled devotees.

Sri Ramakrishna: 'There are people who indulge in all kinds of gossip at the time of their daily devotions. As you know, one is not permitted to talk then; so they make all kinds of signs, in order to say, 'bring this, bring that'; they make sounds like 'Huh, Uhuh'. All such things they do! (Laughter)

'Again there are some who bargain for fish while telling their beads. As they count their rosary, with fingers, they point out the fish, indicating, 'That one, please'. They reserve all their business for that time! (Laughter)

'There are women who come to the Ganga for their bath and, instead of thinking of God, gossip about no end of things. "What jewels did you offer at the time of your son's marriage?" "So and so is seriously ill. So and so went to see the bride; we hope that they will offer a magnificent dowry and that there will be a great feast."

'You see, they have come to bathe in the holy river, and yet they indulge in all sorts of worldly talk. A bath in the Ganga undoubtedly absolves one of all sins; but what does that avail? They say that the sins perch on the trees along the bank of the Ganga. No sooner does a person come back from the holy waters, than the old sins jump on his shoulders from the trees. (All laugh.) The same old sins take possession of him again. He is hardly out of the water before they fall upon him.

'Therefore I say, chant the Name of God, and with it pray to Him, that you may have love for Him. Pray to God that your attachment to such transitory things as wealth, name and creature comforts may become less and less every day.'

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SALUTATIONS TO HER

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता ।
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः ॥

Salutations again and again to the Goddess who abides in all beings in the form of mother.

Chanting of holy texts has an important place in the scheme of spiritual discipline practised in different religious sects. Meditation and Japa are generally given the higher place, for they help the mind to be merged in the direct thought of the chosen Deity. But it is necessary to keep the mind in the thought of the Deity as long as possible. In that, recitation of hymns and then external worship with various ingredients are prescribed. A verse places stotra to the third place in order of importance.[1]

Moreover, varieties of spiritual disciplines have been evolved, for there are varieties of temperaments. To each according to his needs is the plan. Chanting is common in almost every system. After ceremonial Puja too this is taken recourse to. The idea is to revolve in the mind the thought of the Ideal. This becomes facilitated if the devotee thinks of the Deity in as many situations as possible. These situations may be connected with his own life or with the lives of earlier devotees who had the vision of the Deity and received blessings of the Divine. Recitation of the glories and exploits of the Deity narrated in different holy texts thus is a great help in spiritual progress. If it is done with attention, devotion and proper understanding of the texts selected, it results in clarification of ideas and unbroken memory of sacred scenes and thoughts. It is said that even after realization, a saint, while living in this body, spends his time in practising devotions among devotees. A devotee too follows this exercise of chanting, irrespective of his standard of growth.

Chanting assumes greater importance on special occasions when ceremonially too holy texts are recited. Navaratri is one such important occasion when the holy texts of the Devi are recited by all devotees, specially by the Mother-worshippers. Among the Saktas the most popular book for this purpose is the *Chandi*. It is also known as *Durga Saptasati* and *Devi-Mahatmya*. Two other important books are the *Devi-Bhagavata* and the *Lalita-sahasranama*. The first one is a voluminous book and being a Purana it includes various other anecdotes. The *Lalita-sahasranama* enumerates the thousand names of the Goddess. There are different Sakta Upanishads as well as often-chanted hymns of Acharya Sankara and others. The *Chandi* is a narrative of different battles fought by the Goddess in keeping with the purpose of Her incarnation, as She Herself assured :

> 'Whenever there will be trouble from irreligion, I shall incarnate Myself and destroy the enemy.'[2]

The *Chandi* describes different battles fought by the Goddess with the Asuras who were tyrannizing over the world. First She destroyed Madhu and Kaitabha, then Mahishasura and his retinue

[1] प्रथमा प्रतिमापूजा जपस्तोत्रादि मध्यमा ।
उत्तमा मानसी पूजा सोऽहंपूजोत्तमोत्तमा ॥
(*Tantrasarah*)

[2] इत्थं यदा यदा बाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति ।
तदा तदा अवतीर्याहं करिष्याम्यरिसंक्षयम् ॥
(XI, 55)

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and last of all Sumbha and Nisumbha. The whole setting is given as a narration to Suratha and Samadhi by Sage Medhasa.

Sometimes questions are raised that the *Devi Mahatmya* is full of fights and battles with appropriate description. So it does not generate the mood of devotion. It may be true that it does not do so to the uninitiated but those who enter into the spirit of the book will have it. What is life? Is it not struggles against opposite forces? What is the condition of the world at large? Is it not full of battles of opposing interests? The fight between the good and the evil is an eternal one. The Gita describes it. Acharya Sankara speaks of *deva-asura-sangrama,* battle between the good and the bad forces in a man's life. It is true in the cosmic field too. So there is nothing abnormal. It is only a realistic description of the world situation. What makes it unique and of ethical and religious value is the fact that ultimately it is the forces of goodness that win over those of evil. Because of this stress it acquires a great value in rendering hope, courage and faith in mortal man in his seemingly hopeless struggle against evil. Had it not been so, wherefrom would man get courage to fight against his fate, reformers against social evils, national leaders against international disharmony? So this description of battles is not meaningless.

As for creating an instant mood of devotion by reading of holy books, we must remember the Tantrika view of the world and the Deity. It is in the struggles, even in the lost battles, a sadhaka is to see the hands of the Mother. Then only he is established in a steadfast devotion. Swami Vivekananda beautifully describes the mood of an ordinary devotee in a poem, 'And let Shyama dance there'; and suggests the worship of the Terrible also in the following lines:

The flesh hankers for contacts of pleasure,
The senses for enchanting strains of song,
The mind hungers for peals of laughter sweet,
The heart pants to reach realms beyond sorrow;
Say, who cares exchange the soothing moonlight
For the burning rays of the noontide sun?
The wretch whose heart is like the scorching sun,
— Even he fondly loves the balmy moon;
Indeed, all thirst for joy.
Breathes there the wretch
Who hugs pain and sorrow to his bosom?
Misery in his cup of happiness,
Deadly venom in his drink of nectar,
Poison in his throat, — yet he clings to hope.
Lo! how all are scared by the Terrific,
None seek Elokeshi whose form is Death.
The deadly frightful sword, reeking with blood,
They take from Her hand, and put a lute instead!
Thou dreaded Kali, the All-destroyer,
Thou alone art True; Thy shadow's shadow
Is indeed the pleasant Vanamali.
O Terrible Mother, cut quick the core,
Illusion dispel — the dream of happiness,
Rend asunder the fondness for the flesh.

* * * *

Free thyself from the mighty attraction —
The maddening wine of love, the charm of sex.
Break the harp! Forward, with the ocean's cry!
Drink tears, pledge ev'n life, — let the body fall.
Awake, O hero! Shake off thy vain dreams,
Death stands at thy head, — does fear become thee?
A load of misery, true though it is, —

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This Becoming, — know this to be thy God!
His temple — the Shmashān among corpses
And funeral pyres; unending battle, —
That verily is His sacred worship;
Constant defeat, — let that not unnerve thee;
Shattered be little self, hope, name and fame;
Set up a pyre of them, and make thy heart
A burning-ground
And let Shyama dance there.

So we see that a Sakti-worshipper believes in Sakti, strength. He is to steel himself against all fears and weaknesses and the worship of the Mother as Power prepares him for it. Somehow or other the idea is current that devotion must make a man mellow and soft; and then the opponents of religion charge that it is devitalizing, effiminating, weakening. The Saktas have counteracted this notion about devotion. Their idea is, when with the Mother it is surely soft and mellow but when dealing with the aggressions of evil forces, this same devotion must give him the courage of a lion, and giving up all fear, hesitation and selfishness, he must overcome all obstacles, evil forces or distractions and go straight to the Mother. When we appreciate this idea of devotion held by the Sakti-worshippers we shall understand the value of this book.

Moreover, is it a mere chance that other great books of Hinduism also contain much of these wars and battles? The message of the Gita was given in the battlefield. The Mahabharata centres round the fight between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and Ramayana between Rama and Ravana. A spiritual aspirant is a man of the world. He is to face the struggles of life and at the same time must strive for reaching the highest goal, acquiring on the way all the noble virtues that make life sweet and noble too.

It may be admitted that a book like the Gita giving wonderful truths in every other line is more attractive, for it does not spend much time in describing the background. But we must remember that the Gita forms part of the Mahabharata and thus all the background is supplied by the epic. Moreover, a collection of terse, good sayings is good for advanced students who have already heard or can themselves supply the necessary background for each saying to make it appealing, realistic, convincing.

When we plead so much against the charges we shall fail in our duty if we do not draw the attention of the critics that even for general devotional temperament there are four suitable hymns addressed to the Devi, satisfying their temperament. In between the descriptions of fights, these hymns were chanted by the devas whenever they were in difficulty. The first one is spoken by Brahma (I, 70-87), the second by Sakra and other devas (IV, 2-27), the third by devas again (V, 9-82) and the fourth is also by them (XI, 2-35). The first one is known as the Tantrika Ratri-sukta, addressed to Mother in the form of Yoga-nidra to Vishnu. Mahakali with the predominant quality of tamas is Yoga-nidra and is the deity of the first part of the *Chandi*. The three deities with three predominant qualities are three aspects of Mahamaya. As the *Devi Bhagavata* says:

'Her three powers of sattva, rajas and tamas are Mahasarasvati, Mahalakshmi and Mahakali respectively.'[3]

[3] तस्यास्तु सात्त्विकी शक्ती राजसी तामसी तथा।
महालक्ष्मी सरस्वती महाकालीति ताः स्त्रियः॥
(I. 2. 19-20.)

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The chanting of the second one, the *Sakradikrita-stuti,* is often spoken of as equivalent to the reading of the whole *Chandi.* The third stotra is called the Tantrika Devi-sukta or *Aparajita-stava.* The fourth is known as the *Narayani Stuti.* Narayani means the Refuge of the Jivas or Tattvas (*Nārasya ayani*).

These hymns show that the goddess is the very essence of the deities including Brahma, Vishnu and Siva and is the ruler of the world. She has two sets of forms, gentle and terrible. In the gentle forms She is surpassingly beautiful and in the terrible forms She is surpassingly fearful. Mother Durga is not only one who rescues man from dangers and difficulties, but also one who helps man to cross the ocean of samsara. She is the giver of both Abhyudaya and Nisreyasa, the coveted goals of man. Her immanence is greatly stressed in the third hymn saying that She is present in all creatures as consciousness, power, intellect and so on. Moreover these hymns connect Her with all the great deities worshipped by different sects. Thus She is the Vishnumaya, and Narayani as well as Mahamaya, Gauri, Sivani and Kali, also all the powers behind Brahma, Indra, Kumara and others. This is not all. The Divine Mother is Brahman Itself. She is also the supreme deity. It is She who creates, maintains and destroys the entire universe. Therefore it is She who has both the good and the evil. As we told before, the devotees generally try to look upon God as the repository of good qualities only. It is the speciality of the Tantra that it accepts both saumya as well as the raudra (calm and terrible) aspects as belonging to the Mother. It is because of this that in Her terrible aspect also Mother is worshipped in various parts of India. The *Chandi* says :

> 'We prostrate before Her who is at once most gentle and most terrible ; we salute Her again and again. Salutation to Her who is the support of the world. Salutation to the Devi who is of the form of volition.' [4]

Remembering this background we may very well appreciate the four hymns. The different epithets used in the hymns appeal deeply to the devotees. Take for instance, the third hymn where the devas repeatedly offer their salutations to Her with the words: *Namah tasyai.* The depth of feeling created by the act of pranama reciting rhythmically the 23 couplets with the same form throughout is simply marvellous. While reciting this the devotee is reminded that the Goddess has three aspects, viz. sattvika, rajasika and tamasika (serene, active and dull). The sustaining, creating and destroying are the three functions of Her powers in these three aspects. And salutations are offered three times indicating that they are done with the body, speech and mind. It is not for nothing that the *Lakshmi Tantra* says :

> 'This Devisukta is the giver of all fruits. By chanting to the Devi everyday with this sukta the devotee goes beyond all sufferings and achieves all wealth, noble and great.' [5]

On knowing this, who will not like to offer with the devas his respects to the Mother repeatedly saying: *Namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, namo namah* — Salutations, salutations, salutations to Her.

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[4] अतिसौम्यातिरौद्रायै नतास्तस्यै नमो नमः ।
नमो जगत् प्रतिष्ठायै देव्यै कृत्यै नमो नमः ॥
(V. 13.)

[5] नमो देव्यादिकं देवीसूक्तं सर्वफलप्रदम् ।
इमां देवीं स्तुवन्नित्यं स्तोत्रेणानेन मामिह ।
क्लेशानतीत्य सकलानैश्वर्यं महदश्नुते ॥

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SRI DURGA

SWAMI MAITHILYANANDA

Sri Rama's performance of Sri Durga Puja is nowhere mentioned in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. It is described in the *Devi Bhagavatam* (3-30 chapter), in the *Kalika puranam* (60 ch.), in the *Brihaddharma puranam* (Part I, 21, 22) chapters), in the *Mahabhagavatam* (36-48 chapters) and also in some minor puranas.

While Sri Rama was staying in Kiskindhya Sri Narada asked him to perform the vow of Navaratra so that he might obtain the grace of Sri Durga and through its virtue he would be able to kill Ravana and rescue Sita. The vow of Navaratra is, as a rule, observed in the month of Aswina. One has to abstain from food for nine consecutive days during the worship of Sri Durga dating from the first day of the bright moon to the ninth day. One has to repeat the holy mantra of Sri Durga and make oblations to the fire-god according to the injunctions of the scriptures and make sacrifices to propitiate the Goddess. The worship of Durga is very interesting, elevating, and soul-stirring and it is celebrated with pomp and grandeur with various ceremonial details. It is celebrated every year throughout the length and breadth of India. Details of the worship vary from province to province. The spirit of worship is the same everywhere. It is to obtain the grace of the Great Mother, the creatrix of the universe. In Bengal it is performed with artistic images and various ceremonies connected with the main worship. It is the greatest festival with the Bengali Hindus and the whole province becomes animated, as it were, during the festival. Every home appears to be overflowed with joy and happiness. Men, women and children purchase new clothings and greet the Divine Mother along with their kith and kin. They all forget their petty quarrels, jealousies, and sorrows.

The great god, Lord Siva resides in the holy Mount Kailasa in Tibet. Sri Durga is the divine consort of Lord Siva, the Supreme Soul of all beings. He is constantly absorbed in meditation and takes His abode in the cremation ground, surrounded by ghosts and goblins. Dreadful snakes adorn His luminous body and they find a happy place there to roam about. Lord Siva is unconcerned with worldly possessions and considerations. He never hates any body, however demoniacal or ugly. Love is the law of His being and every animal finds a happy home in His holy surroundings. Sri Durga, the Divine Mother possesses the most beautiful figure adorned with all precious jewels and clothings. She appears as the Great Queen of the universe and performs Her duty as an affectionate mother to all beings of the universe. She loves Her children, especially those who are very sincere in heart, obedient and come to Her for help and guidance. Sri Durga is very tender, gentle and sweet to those who approach Her with childlike simplicity and helplessness. She is terrible and indomitable to those who tyrannise over others and who are haughty and overbearing. The Great Mother rides over a fearful lion and with all sorts of arms and weapons fights with tyrants to bring order, happiness, and peace to the world weary of oppressions and highhandedness.

The Great Mother comes from the mount of Kailasa every year at the time of autumn with Her two companions, Sri Lakshmi and Sri Saraswati — the goddesses of wealth and learning. Wherever the Mother goes, these companions invariably follow Her for service and companionship. These two divine companions are very handsome and possess all supreme virtues which men of the world aspire after. When they are well-pleased, they confer on people the blessings of beauty, harmony, riches, learning and all fine arts. Sri Durga brings in Her arms Her most beloved son, Sri Ganesha who possesses the power of conferring intelli-

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gence, wisdom, and ultimate success. She brings by Her side Her another son, Sri Kartikeya brother to Sri Ganesha and he possesses the martial spirit and confers on people the warlike virtues, namely, bravery, heroism, and military success.

Sri Durga with all these companions and sons comes every year in the autumn to pay visit to Her earthly mother, Menaka and father Himalaya. Both the father and the mother love very much their daughter Durga and anxiously await Her coming home from the husband's household in the autumnal season when fields yield bumpous crop, rivers and streams flow with their crystal water, and the sky bereft of clouds, becomes bright with sunshine and nights smile with the milk-white moon.

The whole story, romantic and full of happy imagination, gives joy and peace to the millions of hearts throughout the length and breadth of India. Men and women and children never take it as a ceremony of fancy but expectantly await the most real and genuine event with hearts full of affection and adoration to receive every year the Great Mother with Her sons and companions. The idols become ideals and fictions become facts.

Sri Rama worshipped at Kiskindhya the Great Goddess in autumn and again at Lanka at the time of spring. The Goddess felt most propitiated by the fervent worship of Sri Rama. Sri Rama killed Ravana and rescued Sita stolen by him.

It is mentioned in the *Brahmavaivarta purana* that Lord Krishna once in His celestial region, Golaka worshipped Sri Durga. Lord Siva worshipped Her when confronted by the demon, Tripura. Brahma worshipped Her when attacked by the demons Madhu and Kaitabha. Indra, the king of gods worshipped Her when he had been cursed by the sage Durvasa. In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* the milkmaids worshipped for a month the Great Goddess with due rites with a view to win Sri Krishna as their husband. Rukmini worshipped her fervently to have Sri Krishna as her husband. Sita worshipped the Goddess to have Sri Rama as her husband. The last is mentioned in the Ramayana of Tulasidasa. In the *Mahabharata* (Virat Parva, Ch. 6) it is mentioned that Yudhisthira after exile for twelve years entered the vow of remaining incognito for a year with the worship of Sri Durga. In the Bhisma Parva of the *Mahabharata* (Ch. 23) Sri Krishna exhorted Arjuna to sing the hymn of Sri Durga before the commencement of the Kurukshetra war.

In the *Rigveda, Taittiriya Aranyaka,* Sri *Devi Atharva Sirsha,* the *Devi Upanishad* and the *Devi Purana* the significance of the name of Durga has been explained as the One who rescues Her devotees in times of danger, despondency, and difficulties. She fights for Her children with uniform success and the duty of Her children is to depend on Her at every step of life. Especially when Her devout children surrender themselves with childlike simplicity and dependence, the Great Mother's heart melts in motherly affection and saves them under all untoward circumstances.

I take refuge in Her, the Goddess Durga, who is fiery in lustre and radiant with ardency, who is the Power belonging to the Supreme who manifests Himself manifoldly, who is the Power residing in actions and their fruits rendering them efficacious (or the Power that is supplicated to by the devotees for the fruition of their work). O Thou Goddess skilled in saving, Thou takest us across difficulties excellently well. Our salutations to Thee.

— *Mahanarayana Upanishad,* II, 2.

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STATUS OF THE WORLD AND MOTIVE OF CREATION

The following question was raised by a correspondent: 'In Chapter 1, Section 2 of the Aitareyopanisad (Swami Sharvananda's translation) we read, "He, the Creator, subjected the Virat or aggregate body to hunger and thirst. The gods spoke to Him: Grant us a place where we can establish ourselves and eat food." The note on this says: "... For the Creator first subjected His own Virat or aggregate form to hunger and thirst, and as a consequence His own emanations like Fire and Sun were also troubled by hunger and thirst." I have the utmost difficulty in believing that Brahman would subject Himself to such infinite frustration out of anything corresponding to the instinct of play, in any meaning of *play* that I can assign: more especially in view of the fact that the Atman remains untainted by the process which was initiated, presumably, by Him. (Or, to allow the same book, again, to say it: ". . . the entanglement of Purusha in the Samsara is not really true.") Why, then, did the Atman commence to hunger for that from which we are to be delivered?'

Below is given a symposium on this baffling question. Swami Vivekananda once answered it in the following words: The question itself is most illogical. Brahman is *Avangmanasogocharam*, meaning that which is incapable of being grasped by word and mind. Whatever lies beyond the region of space, time, and causation cannot be conceived by the human mind, and the function of logic and inquiry lies only within the region of space, time, and causation. While that is so, it is a vain attempt to question about what lies beyond the possibilities of human conception.

(*C. W.*, Vol. V, p. 136)

I

A Note on the Status of the World

Among the many views regarding the status of the world that are to be found in Indian philosophy two are the most important—one which considers the world to be a real emanation from God, and the other which holds it to be an illusory appearance. The former is the view of the theistic Vedantins like Ramanuja, and the latter is the teaching of Advaitins like Gaudapada and Sankara.

Theistic Vedanta: God is the source of the world. It should be remembered that the souls are not created: what are created are the body-mind complexes and the material world. The world is not created from any stuff external to God: it is a manifestation of a part of God. To the question 'why should God cause the manifestation of the world', the reply is: it is His *lila* (sport, play). The meaning of the expression *lila* is that God does not create the world because of compulsion or to achieve any ends of His own. But has not world-creation a purpose? Yes: the purpose is the liberation of souls from bondage. Who caused the bondage of souls, and when? The answer is that bondage is beginningless, but can be put an end to by the grace of God.

Advaita Vedanta: Any attempt to explain creation is bound to fail. On the phenomenal level, the intellect seeks to inquire into the nature of the world, and does not succeed in its attempt. When the final intuition of the Absolute is gained, it will be realized that the world was never created, that it is an illusory appearance. *Brahman* or *Atman* alone is: the world is a misreading thereof, even as the illusory snake is seen in the rope. The texts of the Upanishads which speak of creation have no purport of their own. They are to be interpreted figuratively. They serve to introduce the subject of non-duality.

The meaning of the *Aitreya Upanishad* text about creation, for instance, is that even the gods are afflicted with hunger and thirst. And so, attaining identity with them cannot be the final goal. Wherever there is duality, there will be pain and misery. It is only the non-dual Spirit that is absolute bliss.

T. M. P. Mahadevan

II

The Vedantist or Vedantic Literature that deals systematically with the quest after the Ultimate Reality is what is known as *Prasthana Traya* or the collection of three texts that permit the true approach to Brahman or the

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origin of Being. They are the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutra of Sage Badarayana and the Bhagavad Gita or the Celestial Song. Sri Sankara has written illuminating commentaries on the three texts which are most authoritative.

The Origin of Being and the Motive for Creation are indeed the most baffling and abstruse problems in the great quest. These problems are raised by the Upanishadic thinkers in the course of their daring speculations and answered from various standpoints according to the level of discussion that is concentrated on God, man and the universe.

Ch. 1. Sec. 2 of the Aitareyopanishad refers to the creation of *Virat* or the Cosmic Person who represents the macro-cosmic conception of the world-ground.

The Energy of Creation is hidden in the Creator in terms of Supreme Knowledge and Supreme will. 'पराऽस्यशक्तिः विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च'

(*Svetaswatara Upanishad*, VI. 9.)

At the time of Creation, it produces, in the natural time-process, disturbances in primordial matter which are transmitted along the planes of ether, air and water so as to result in the formation and functioning of the variegated forms of life in the differentiated universe.

These disturbances are *graphically* and *figuratively* equated to experiences of 'hunger and thirst' that are so familiar to the embodied being. Evidently, the Upanishadic seer employed the language of figures and similes in conveying abstruse philosophical and mystic ideas.

Again *Virat* or the Cosmic Person essaying to create an ordered universe at the end of a cycle is represented as performing *Tapas* and voluntarily subjecting himself to 'hunger and thirst' in his resolve to 'divide light from darkness before the creation of the firmament' — if we may borrow the language of the Bible. *This resolve to do Tapas or penance is attributed not to 'frustration'—but to a sense of 'compassion or unilateral love'* that goes out to redeem the unredeemed world. It is identified with the divine urge to become many by entering into creation and ministering to the needs of the manifested. 'बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति' 'तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्'

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, II. 6.)

Regarding the motive of the creator, two views are formulated by the Upanishadic seers —according as creation itself is regarded as real or simply apparent and empirical.

(a) According to the assumption that Creation is real as it appears in the waking condition, the motive of the Creator is Play, Pure Play, Simple Play, but Sublime and Beautiful Play—played without effort and without an eye to profit—purely for the redemption of man who is being helped to recover the 'Lost Paradise'. 'लोकवत्तु लीलाकैवल्यम्' (*Brahma Sutra*. II. 1. 32). It is the considered estimate of the Creator's function in relation to cosmic activity; उदयविधि.....दयया is Sankara's reference to the inwardness of the play in his *Saundaryalahari*.

(b) According to the view that Creation is only apparent and empirical and the life of man is 'a sleep and a forgetting' the question of motive does *not* arise. Brahman the Creator, is excluded from all attributes of name, form or function that might lead to specification or individuality. He is regarded as *Pure Bliss, Para Brahman* transcending definition.

This view is attended to in the Chandogya Upanishad in the famous Article of Instructions given by Uddalaka to Swetaketu, and in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the classical dialogue between Sage Yajnavalkya and his wife Maitreyi.

The view is elaborated most completely in the Mandukya Upanishad which examines the reality of the pluralistic universe and arrives at the conclusion that the true state of man is beyond the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. The true state is a Fourth State, a Turiya Condition in which the Incorporated Self transcends the limitations of the

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Time process; and stands self-revealed as the Timeless Absolute, and finds its identity with Brahman which is the pre-cosmic existence of God, the Creator.

This realisation of identity is stated to be possible for those who have completely controlled all the fluctuations of the mind and intellect, by life-long practice of the discipline of *yoga* or Meditation on the Supreme Godhead—united to *Vichara* or Reflective Analysis. ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते etc. (Bhagavad Gita, 12. 3, 4).

K. PANCHAPAGESAN

III

A straight and categorical answer to this question cannot be given. Before we answer this question we have to remember the following points. The above question may be more generally restated as follows: If I am Brahman as the Sruti tells, why should I suffer all the miseries of this world?

The most leading and fundamental concept in Vedanta is that of Brahman. This Brahman is the Absolute, undetermined, indeterminable, attributeless, transempirical and transcendental. We cannot describe Brahman adequately by words for to do so is to limit Him. All determination is negation. He transcends qualities and is not an object to be *known*. He is to be experienced — a transcendental experience for He is nothing more and nothing less than our very Self.

We cannot attribute creation to Him for Brahman has no relation with the world. Brahman is pure existence (without anything empirical), pure consciousness (without its being discursive) and pure bliss (without any individual or discrete factor). *Atma ca Brahma* —He is nothing else than our innermost Self. Atman and Brahman are identical. Hence the Nirguna Brahman or Atman cannot subject Himself to Samsara. What is however, subjected to Samsara is the Jiva which we may translate as the empirical ego or empirical self which consists of the gross and the subtle bodies including the avidya in a dormant form.

This Jiva is not completely different from Brahman or the Atman because Brahman alone *really* exists. In one sense it is different from Brahman because the latter is the Absolute while the former is bound and limited by the upadhis (determinants). How did these determinants come about? This is the most difficult question to answer. We are having our living and existence in a world characterised by plurality and pain or as Samkara prefers to call it, *nama-rupa-prapanca*. Obviously this should have had its existence from the Primordial Reality, Brahman. How did the infinite and the unlimited become the finite and the limited? No philosophy is capable of answering this question satisfactorily. Samkara overcomes this difficulty with the concept of Maya.

Samkara points out that the question of the creation of the world with its names and forms is illegitimate. If we take our stand on the intuitive experience of Brahman the question of the world and its relation to Brahman does not arise because in that standpoint we realise that the world is an illusion and that it has no real reality. When we take our stand on the Personal Lord (Iswara) there is no Parabrahman to be related to the world. The confusion arises because we apply the empirical category of causation to Brahman and take Him as the cause of the world. We ascribe a temporal phase to Brahman and think creation should have taken place in a particular time. We also naturally attribute a motive for creation. Nirguna Brahman does not create.

Without going too far into the question of Maya, we may say that Brahman under the limitation of Maya becomes personal or limited and then is an abode of all kinds of good attributes. It is Iswara who under the influence of Maya or Avidya *creates* the world. The Atman becomes limited and under the spell of Avidya takes himself to be bound and limited and this is the Jiva who imagines that he is a *samsari* ever born and dying. Brahman or Atman from the standpoint of Maya is

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Iswara. This is under the influence of pure Maya. Under the influence of impure (dominated by tamas or rajas) Maya we have the Jiva. The Jiva identifies himself with the physical body, the senses and the mind and thus fancies he undergoes the misery and unhappiness while actually, from the ultimate viewpoint, there is no pain or misery. Pain and misery arise only because the Jiva identifies himself with the physical body, the senses and the manas. The unhappiness and misery of the empirical ego is only because of the various upadhis or adventitious conditions with which it is covered like body, senses, prana, etc. The Atman does not experience any pain, for in its own condition it is blissful. The Atman who is in the Jiva as a Sakshi principle as he is elsewhere is not affected by the experiences of the Jiva. Hence with reference to the question in Aitareopanisad it is not correct to say that Brahman subjects himself to such infinite frustration out of anything corresponding to the instinct of play. The Virat and the several Devas are not Brahman; they are the lesser manifestations clouded by Avidya; in short they are Jivas, slightly better than us. Their pain and misery does not affect the Absolute. The entanglement of the Purusha (Atman) in the samsara is not really true for this reason. It is the Jiva who is caught in the folds of samsara, and later when the Jiva realises that he is Brahman, he is liberated.

The truth regarding the theory of Play or Lila seems to be as follows. Samkara argues as follows: The objection says that any activity must have a motive and hence Brahman's activity also must have a motive. But if Brahman has a motive it detracts His perfection. He is not *aptakama,* one who has no desires. Hence He (Iswara) cannot be the Creator. Samkara denies this and takes the example of breathing which goes on without any extraneous purpose; it merely follows its own law. In the same way Iswara creates from His very nature. Why does the Lord create a world which is useless for Him and which is nothing but misery to the people? Iswara is not responsible for the misery of the Jivas for the reason that one's happiness or otherwise depends on one's karma (his previous activity). What is God's nature that makes Him create? We cannot answer this question with our finite intelligence. Brahman-intuition alone can answer this question. Samkara is clear on this point. But if we may hazard a guess, the Lila or sport is the overflow of the Bliss within the Lord. This spontaneous overflow is symbolised by the theory of Lila. Regarding the suffering and evil in this world, Samkara clearly says that God is not responsible for it for that depends on the merit and demerit of the created — the jivas. The Lord creates but the potentialities of the created beings are responsible for their happiness or unhappiness. It may be objected that at the time of the first creation there should have been a state of equality and as such unequal potentialities among the Jivas could not have been possible. Samkara answers this objection by remarking that samsara is without beginning. The world is without beginning and punya and papa are like the seed and the plant.

A very probable cause for misunderstanding this point is due the shifting of the absolute and the relative standards between the Absolute and the relative — between Brahman and Iswara, the Being who is above creation and the Creator, the Impersonal Absolute and the Personal Absolute. From this point of view even the Virat is only a Jiva subject to the modification by Maya who identifies himself with the upadhis. Hence when the devas and the powers begin to hunger and thirst, we cannot conclude that the Atman commenced to hunger and thirst from which we desire deliverence. The theory of Lila as we have tried to show is not untenable. Brahman by Himself does not create. It is only when He becomes personal under the influence of Maya (He is now called Isvara) that He becomes the creator. This distinction must be remembered.

We may finally summarise our reply to the Question, as follows:

1. The Atman does not really subject Himself to Samsara. From the influence or per-

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vasion or view-point of Maya, or associated with Maya, He becomes Iswara. Under the influence of several gradations of Maya (pure and impure) Iswara becomes Jivas or in popular language creates the Jivas. These Jivas become samsaris. Though in the final (Paramarthika) view Atman-Brahman alone is, under the spell of Maya, Avidya or Ajnana, we have the Jivas.

2. Why does Brahman allow Himself to be under Maya, though the Sruti tells us that He is above Maya? Maya is the principle of plurality and multiplicity and at the same time it obscures and hides the Reality. Without this Maya, Brahman cannot create. The One becomes the Many through Maya.

3. Though from the absolute standpoint Brahman alone is (*ekamevadvitiyam*) we have to distinguish between Brahman and Iswara, Virat. the lesser deities, etc. Hence when the emanations of Virat like Fire and Sun suffer from hunger and thirst, it is not as though Brahman Himself suffers from hunger and thirst. Hence Brahman does not subject Himself to hunger and thirst.

4. The theory of *Play* or *Lila* does not imply God's contemptuous amusement at man's sufferings. Subjecting Himself to the covering of Maya is itself Lila or sport. Then as personal God, He creates. Man is happy or unhappy and miserable because of his Past Karmas. It is man's own doing. This chain of Karma is anadi, has no beginning, though it has end when Brahma-Jnana dawns on the Jiva.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

LOVING JUSTICE

N. S. KARANTH

The day was when I did a grievous wrong to my brother. I caused him intense pain. You, Blessed Mother, had me summoned before you for questioning. I tried to justify my wrongs. You pronounced the judgment: 'Ten strokes of the whip!'

Oh! it was too much for me, I thought. And I resented, I struggled, I complained.

But you said sternly: 'My Laws are immutable. Ends of Justice shall be secure.' I felt you were roaring like thunder. You were too harsh, I thought.

When the first two strokes fell on my back, I almost revolted. Oh! they were all a pain!

With the third stroke, it dawned upon me that my brother too must have suffered similarly owing to the wrong I had done him.

One more stroke; and then . . . I did feel sorry for having hurt my brother.

The fifth;—ah! this time the pain was much less!—and I knew you were but just. I realised that you were only re-establishing the harmony I had thoughtlessly disturbed. 'Loving Mother, Thy will be done!' said I, and I sent up a prayer of thanksgiving too.

Then I bowed down to receive the remaining strokes,—silently, meekly.

But, marvel and joy! they did not at all pain me! I felt the whip falling very very lightly indeed!

Just as the last stroke fell on my back, I opened my eyes, only to see You by my side, O, my Darling Mother! bearing the brunt of the strokes on Your own back, the whip all but touching me!

Seeing Your infinite mercy, O Fountain of Love, profuse tears rolled down my cheeks.

Your Laws remain Immutable. Your Justice is fulfilled. Yet, Your Love reigns supreme!

Wonderful are Your ways, O Divine Mother!

Hail, all hail to You, O Mother Supreme!

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SRI KRISHNA AS REVEALED BY SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

Sri Krishnashtami which falls usually in the middle of August is a national festival of India. From one end to the other during this festival the whole nation rejoices in the fullness of heart. In innumerable homes, temples and shrines are lighted lights, burnt incense, sung songs, made offerings and hymned prayers. Not only that. There go on a tremendous activity in the kitchens of the nation where mothers and sisters busy themselves preparing all kinds of delicacies to the great delectation of not only the dancing kids, but perhaps also of the grown-ups of the home, who while enjoying the sweets will not however as candidly express their joy. By the side of sweets there are enthralling bhajans, ecstatic discourses on the leela of Krishna, learned expositions of the holy texts on the Lord, and serene meditations of the devotee in the core of their heart.

Do you come from cold north or hot south? Do you speak Tamil or Hindi? Do you vote for this or that party? Are you a chubby child busy with your toy, a young maiden fond of your mirror, an old man bending on your stick? — Krishna pulls every one. He is the Mover of the mind, Enchanter of the heart and Inspirer of the soul.

Who ever knew better the art of 'catching people young' than Krishna? Have you seen a child who is not madly in love with Kannan? Give a picture of Krishna, and then try to take it back — you will know what I mean.

And having caught young, Krishna never leaves him — though he may once in a while play hide and seek — but evolves Himself inside the man from the playmate to Purushottama. The sharer of frolics of the childhood of life becomes the refuge and the redeemer of the last moment.

The grip of Sri Krishna is so great on this liberation-minded nation that many a plan of campaign of those who come to India to do the good work of soul-saving have foundered on this phenomenon on many an occasion.

Krishna is so irresistibly attractive that He fascinates not only devotees but also vilifiers. Countless crude and fantastic, ignorant and vicious attacks have been made on our Lord. No person with good sense, will like to recount them. One can only pity those who out of religious spite will not see the beauty even of Krishna, who will not listen to the transporting cadence of his lute, who will not open his soul to the saving power of his song celestial. He has been called all sorts of names and dyed in the blackest of colours. And why? Because those who sought to overthrow Hinduism rightly realized quite early that until and unless Krishna was dislodged from the devotion of the people, there was little chance of any other religion thriving here to the expected degree. We cannot say they have always failed in their efforts.

By and large however, Krishna stands to this day supreme in the devotions and aspirations of the Hindu. Not only that, Krishna's message in the form of Gita has also gone forth in the world and claimed reverential study by the best minds of the world. The Gita has been translated in almost all civilized languages of the world and acclaimed as most sublime, authentic and saving scripture of humanity by the most discerning minds of almost every nation. Popularity of the Gita naturally has aroused inquisitiveness about the giver of the wonderful message. Such a development has not of course been to the liking of those people who have been dreaming and working for world-conquest for a different religion. While it would appear that crude and vulgar vilification of Sri Krishna is on the wane, a subtler type campaign, a campaign of so-called 'higher criticism' is becoming fashionable.

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In a recent publication entitled '*The Inevitable Choice*',* one Dr Edmund Davison Soper (emeritus professor of history of religion, Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.) puts across the campaign in the following manner :

'With all that might be said about Rama and Krishna, the question arises, "How much of what is recounted about them and their character is true to fact?" The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are for the most part imaginary. Was the battle of Kurukshetra ever fought; is the quarrel between the Pandavas and the Kurus more than fiction? There are many Hindu fundamentalists who would have us believe that every event recorded in the epic is true, but many could not go as far as that. There are all too many wonders to allow the modern scientific Hindu historian to assert the historicity of much that is to be found in these writings.

'I was invited to attend a meeting of the Arya Samaj on the occasion of the alleged birthday (Please note the word '*alleged*'). Much of what was said in Hindi was translated quietly to me as one speaker after another told of Krishna, that he was a great hero, a great counsellor, a great ruler and administrator, and so on through other characterisations, with not the slightest question being raised as to whether all the statements made or any of them would be sustained by adequate historical evidence. The fact is that the whole story of Krishna is based so largely on imaginative legend bordering on myth, that it is difficult to extract the modicum of reliable fact in any part of the narrative. What this amounts to is that no one knows what the real Krishna was like or even there was ever such a character. The one great significant fact is that Krishna — and the same may be said of Rama — cannot justifiably be said to have performed a single act which makes the slightest difference in the life of anyone living today. No wonder a Hindu can say with no fear of contradiction that it makes no difference whether Krishna or Rama ever lived or not!'

Could we not also add, — 'whether Christ ever existed or not'. Notwithstanding 'historical' ministration of Christ for 2,000 years, the nuclear arms race by Christian or erstwhile Christian nations have kept the world hovering on brinks of destruction. This is undoubtedly making a vast difference in life! Dare you deny this?

It is amazing that the learned author would not see the imprudence of throwing stones while living in a glass house. The question of historicity, the author should have remembered, is quite a boomerang which can very well turn round on Christ.

However, the Hindu is not interested in creating spiritual difficulties for the Christian. He accepts Christ as an incarnation of God, taking refuge in whom one can attain liberation. The numerous saints of Christianity who have proved beyond doubt in their lives the truth of Christianity are objects of adoration to the true Hindu. The Hindu can vouchsafe the redemptive power of Christ for Jesus exemplifies those very spiritual laws which are quite within his comprehension and realization.

But, alongside, the Hindu wants to emphasize the fact that as far as he is concerned he can construct to perfection the whole life of Sri Krishna from his birth to his death. We do not think, even the most enthusiastic Christian can claim to know more details about Christ's life than the Hindu knows about the life of Krishna.

We know on what day Krishna was born, we know so much about his parents and relatives. We know the minutest details of his bewitching physical beauty. We know where he grazed his cattle, played on his flute, sported with friends, drove the chariot of Arjuna, and finally where and when he fell. And we know much more. Vrindavan, Mathura, Kurukshetra, Dwaraka are not merely geographical names with us but they are the hallmarks of Krishna's life indelibly impressed on the racial consciousness of India. Even then we do not make much of history. Why? Because while the Christian considers Christ to be the pivot of history, the Hindu considers history to be the pivot of Maya! We are not anxious to prove that once upon a time Krishna lived in this world, for does He not live for ever and ever?

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त्वमक्षरं परमं वेदितव्यं
त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
त्वमव्ययः शाश्वतधर्मगोप्ता
सनातनस्त्वं पुरुषो मतो मे ॥

Gita, XI. 18.

'Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme being, the one thing to be known. Thou art the great refuge of the universe; Thou art the undying Guardian of the Eternal Dharma, Thou art, I know, the most Ancient Being.'

Have we to hold up our flickering light of dubious history to discern or darken the reality of the existence of one who sustains this universe with the fraction of his power?

When you are standing before me right now here, when I can see you and touch you, hear you and embrace you, have I to busy myself to prove that you were historically present yesterday? Now if the Hindu is indifferent about the historicity of Time-Krishna, it is because the Timeless-Krishna is always here and now, if we would but only see Him. Countless devotees have seen and heard Him play on His flute even after His physical disappearance. Songs of the Alwars, Jayadev, Candidas, Vidyapati, Surdas, Mirabai, Tukaram and many other saints bring to us the vivid impression of the seeability of the Timeless-Krishna.

But to be able to construct Sri Krishna's life, or to be able to silence hostile critics is not synonymous with understanding the truth about Krishna. In fact in our books there are things written about Krishna which may very well puzzle us. So for understanding Krishna-tattwa (truth) we require guidance. And nowhere this guidance is better available than in Sri Ramakrishna.

In one place Swami Vivekananda says that in this age of ours, otherwise ununderstandable scriptures become intelligible if we study them in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's life, realizations and teachings. This statement of Swamiji, can very well lend itself to be interpreted as a remarkable homage to his own Guru. But if we stop with taking the statement at that we will miss its real significance. Here is an objective truth spoken by Swamiji; Ramakrishna is not taken here as a mere person emotionally associated with him but as a unique revealer of spiritual truths. As we study the life of Sri Krishna in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's life, we shall realize the significance of Swamiji's statement.

The authority of Sri Ramakrishna in revealing Sri Krishna to us consists precisely in the fact that he did Krishna-sadhana, saw Him and was mystically united with Him. This is how we can speak of Krishna with greater authority than any frightening scholar who knows the whole *Bhagavata, Mahabharata* or *Harivamsa* by heart. To directly go into the core of our theme:

It was a Sunday, May 25, 1884. Thus it is recorded in the Gospel of *Sri Ramakrishna*: * (2nd Edn. p. 392).

'The musician sang a song about *renunciation* in the monastic life of Chaitanya . . .

'The Master stood up, as he heard about Chaitanya's renunciation and went into samadhi. The devotees put garlands of flowers around his neck. Bhavanath and Rakhal supported his body lest he should fall on the ground . . . .

'The Master gradually came down to the sense plane. He was talking to Krishna, now and then uttering the word "Krishna". He could not say it very distinctly because of the intensity of the spiritual emotion. He said, "Krishna! Krishna! Krishna-Satchidananda! Now-a-days I do not see your form. (Please mark the words) Now-a-days I do not see your form. (That is to say previous to this he had been frequently seeing his form!) Now-a-days I do not see your form. Now I see you both inside me and outside. I see that it is you who have become the universe, all living beings, the twenty-four cosmic principles, and everything else. You alone have become mind, intelligence, everything. It is said in the 'Hymn of Salutations to the Guru': 'I bow down to the Guru by whose grace I have realized Him who pervades the indivisible universe of the animate and the inanimate."

'You alone are indivisible. Again, it is you who pervade the universe of the animate and inanimate. You are verily the manifold universe;

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again you alone are its basis. O Krishna! You are my life. O Krishna! You are my mind. O Krishna! You are my intelligence. O Krishna! You are my soul. O Govinda! You are my life-breath. You are my life itself!'

This most spontaneous revelation of Sri Krishna, which came out directly from that blissful, superconscious state of samadhi, will be found on scrutiny to bear testimony to Krishna's own words about Himself or Arjuna's eulogy after the vision of the cosmic form.

Take the line: 'Now I see both inside me and outside'.

Does it not sound to be just same as:

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

'By Me, in my unmanifested form, are all these things in this universe pervaded.

Gita: IX. 4

Take again please the line: 'I *see* that it is you, (please note the word 'see') who have become the universe, etc.'

Is it not very much like saying:

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते ॥

'I am the origin of all; from Me all things evolve.' Gita: X. 8.

Here is Arjuna's ecstatic hymn just after his direct vision of the cosmic form of the Lord:

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास
त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥
त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराण-
स्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम
त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥

Gita, XI. 37, 38.

'O Infinite One, Lord of gods, Abode of the universe, Thou art the Imperishable Being and non-being and that which is the Supreme.

'Thou art the first of gods, the ancient soul; Thou art the supreme Resting-place of the universe. Thou are the Knower and That which is to be known and the Ultimate Goal. And by Thee is the world pervaded, O Thou of Infinite Form,

Compare this with what Sri Ramakrishna sees and narrates:

'You alone are the indivisible. Again it is you who pervade the universe of the animate and the inanimate. You are verily the manifold universe; again you alone are its basis'.

Now we shall do well here to remember that Sri Ramakrishna is not here just paraphrasing the text of the Gita. The marvel is that even then his exposition of Krishna-reality almost coincides with that of the Gita. Is this not really an amazing phenomenon?

Here we have the Timeless-Krishna expressing Himself through a suitable medium, if we may say so, of a consciousness which had become identical with the cosmic consciousness of his own. This Krishna-revelation in Ramakrishna is as it were a posterior authentication of a prior Avatara. Take it this way or any way you like. Here is in any case a proof positive that Timeless-Krishna is ever available for spiritual communion and realisation, provided you are ready to pay down the price for it.

Krishna-sadhana is not running after ignis-fatuus. It is the search for that reality which will endure even all nuclear idiocies of the learned lunatics.

Now, as has been mentioned above, this Krishna-awareness came to Sri Ramakrishna by not an accident. It is recorded in the Gospel that 'For a long period Sri Ramakrishna also worshipped God as his beloved Krishna, looking on himself as one of the Gopis or as God's handmaid'. (p. 397). Sri Ramakrishna realized Sri Krishna through the sadhana of Gopi-bhava.

As you all know, this part of Krishna's life when he sported with the Gopis, lends itself to a very facile misinterpretation at the hands of eager, determined, hide-bound vilifiers of Hinduism. Hindus themselves will also not be a few who are ready to criticize Krishna's this part of life. But in misunderstanding Krishna here they have no better guide than their own unregenerate, gross sensibilities.

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As to the attitude of Gopis to Krishna, critics forget, it was no monopoly of theirs. If Gopis were bad women, they are company of quite a few mystics of Christendom. Was not Christ considered to be the bridegroom with many a bride to pine for him? Did not St. Juan pray to Christ: 'Make me Thy bride. I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thy arms'. What about St. Theresa, St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Sienna? Even such an austere person, such a masculine saint as St. Francis, when he saw a vision of Christ on Mt. Alvernia, sang: 'My spouse, the Beloved Lamb, has wed me with the nuptial ring'. Then why blame Gopis?

It is not without reason the Upanishad says: आचार्यवान् पुरुषः वेद। He alone knows the truth who has as his guide the knower of truth. To have realized Krishna through the sadhana of Gopi-bhava makes Sri Ramakrishna a unique 'acharya' or teacher in this regard, who can throw the most authentic conceivable light on this most controversial theme. What does Sri Ramakrishna say about the Gopis' relation with Krishna?

Various are the occasions mentioned in the Gospel when the very utterance of the name of Gopis and Krishna throw Sri Ramakrishna into paroxysm of ecstatic songs, dance and ultimately deep samadhi. Back to normal consciousness from this supreme state of God-consciousness Sri Ramakrishna comes out with his estimation of the Gopis' love for Krishna. As such remarks will speak for themselves, we shall quote one or two passages from the Gospel:

This happened during a festival at Surendra's house on a Sunday, June 15, 1884. We are just quoting some passages from the Gospel: (p. 397).

'... The musician sang about the anguish of Radha at the separation from Krishna. When Sri Ramakrishna heard the song he suddenly stood up. Assuming the mood of Radha, he sang in a voice laden with sorrow, improvising the words: "O Friend, either bring my beloved Krishna here or take me to him." Thus singing he completely lost himself in Radha and could not continue the song. He became speechless, his body motionless, his eyes half-closed, his mind totally unconscious of the outer world. He was in deep Samadhi.'

After a long time he regained his normal consciousness and during the course of conversation said:

'Ah! How wonderful was the yearning of the Gopis for Krishna! They were seized with divine madness at the very sight of the black Tamala tree . . . .

'Ah! if anyone has but a particle of such prema! What yearning! What love! Radha possessed not only one hundred per cent of divine love, but one hundred and twenty-five per cent. This is what is meant to be intoxicated with ecstatic love of God. The sum and substance of the whole matter is that a man must love God, must be restless for Him'. (p. 401)

Sri Ramakrishna could not speak of Gopis without exclamation of highest regard and wonder. For, to him Gopis were the exemplifiers of the highest type of ecstatic devotion for God—*Ekabhakti,* which sweeps away every other consideration and concern of life except the union with the beloved. Ordinary hide-bound mortals suffering from numberless desires, inhibition, superstitions, putting up brave faces but pining for low things, talking heroically but unable to give up even a rag in the name of God, slaves of social conventions and deluders of themselves, can never understand the madness of Gopis' love for Sri Krishna.

In another place of the Gospel, Sri Ramakrishna describes the *Ekabhakti* of the Gopis in the following strain: (p. 158):

'If people feel sincere longing, they will find that all paths lead to God. But one should have *nistha* single-minded devotion. It is also described as *chaste and unswerving* devotion to God. It is like a tree with only one trunk shooting straight up. Promiscuous devotion is like a tree with five branches. Such was the single-minded devotion of the Gopis to Krishna that they did not care to look at anyone but the Krishna they had seen at Vrindavan — the Shepherd Krishna, bedecked with a garland of yellow wild flowers and wearing a peacock feather on his crest. At the sight of Krishna at Mathura with a turban on his head and dressed in royal robes, the Gopis pulled down

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their veils. They would not look at his face. Who is this man? they said, should we violate our chaste love for Krishna by talking to him?'

Here is a unique point to note and profit by. It is only the Gopis who are chaste in love for Krishna, the God Incarnate. Those who have not given themselves up to God in the manner of the Gopis are not chaste because they have divided loyalties.

Now if Krishna reciprocated that chaste love of Gopis in the manner he did, whatever may the worldly wiseacres say, he acted only as befits the Lord.

People, who criticise Him forget that during His Vrindaban Lila Sri Krishna was just ten in age. The gay appearance of this sport of Paramatman with atman have all the modes of erotic ventures no doubt but to whom and for whom? When the Gopi comes to Krishna, it is the pull of the infinite to the finite, not of Mr. So-and-so for somebody-else's wife.

As to Krishna under fire, Sri Ramakrishna puts up the defence in the following manner: (Gospel p. 570):

'Sri Krishna has a peacock feather on his crest. The feather bears the sign of the female sex. The significance of this is that Krishna carries the female principle on His head. When Krishna joined the arch of Gopis to dance with them, He appeared there as a woman. That is why you see Him wearing woman's apparel in the company of the Gopis.'

It is necessary, specially for a spiritual aspirant, to strive to understand the *leela* or the deportment of the Lord in the correct perspective (तत्तत:) for by so doing he can realize the supreme goal of life. While discoursing on different yogas in the Gita, Sri Krishna on rare occasions turns to this theme and in the abundance of His grace indicates to the embodied souls the quickest and the easiest way to realize God.

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वत: ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

Gita, IV, 9.

Who so knows, in the true light, My divine birth and action, will not be born again when he leaves his body, he will attain Me, O Arjuna.

The grace of the Lord is not so much in his incarnating in the world for the redemption of the souls, or in his teaching the various ways of liberation, but in his caring to say that in the scheme of liberation what the Lord means.

Grace could not possibly go further than this personal call:

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥

VIII, 7.

'Therefore, at all times, constantly remember Me and fight. With your mind and understanding, absorbed in Me, you will surely come to Me.'

To say:

यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् ।
असम्मूढ: स मर्त्येषु सर्वपापै: प्रमुच्यते ॥

X, 3.

'He who knows that I am unborn and without a beginning, and also that I am the supreme Lord of the Universe — he, undeluded among mortals, is freed from all sins.'

is to give out everything without closing the fist. This giving of his own person by the Lord for the appropriation of the devotee, and promising that this appropriation alone will bring about the final beatitude, is the utmost self-sacrifice God could ever make.

This personal call of Sri Krishna attains fulfilment in the supreme sloka:

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुच: ॥

XVIII, 66.

'Abandon all dharmas and come to Me alone for shelter. I will deliver you from all sins; do not grieve.'

This supplication of the Lord as it were to the jivas, this spreading out of the personal self, for the redemption of the souls, becomes understandable to us to a degree when we study this phenomenon in the light of Sri Ramakrishna's own spreading out of his

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incarnate self for the same purpose. It thus occurs in the Gospel. The Master says referring to one devotee : (p. 780) :

> 'What a state Dwija is passing through! In my presence he only sways his body and fixes his glance on me. Is this a trifling thing? If a man gathers his whole mind and fixes it on me, then, indeed, he achieves everything.
>
> 'But what am I? It is all He. I am the machine and He is the operator. It is God alone who exists in this (meaning this body). That is why so many people are feeling more and more attracted to it. A mere touch is enough to awaken their spirituality. This attraction, this pull, is the attraction of God and of none else.'
>
> (Gospel, p. 695)

On yet another occasion while seated surrounded by devotees he said with a smile :

> 'Please stroke my feet gently.'

To the self-conscious moderners it will appear to be an outrageous request. But we have to remember, when understood in the right perspective this was but the supreme act, act of mercy of God on earth. So it is recorded in the Gospel :

> 'They (the devotees) carried out his request. He (Sri Ramakrishna) said to M., "There is great significance in this". Placing his hand on his heart, the Master said, "If there is anything here, then through this service the ignorance and illusion of the devotees will be completely destroyed".'

To say this is the same as :

> सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
>
> 'Abandon all dharma and come to Me alone for shelter.'

To understand this self-abandonment of God is to become divine, by abandoning oneself in God.

On an *uttara-avatara* (subsequent incarnation) devolves a spiritual duty, of revealing afresh the essential teachings of a previous incarnation through his life and message. Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled this duty to an amazing degree. In this sense alone Avataras come to fulfil but not to destroy. And this task of fulfilment is sometimes carried on in a revolutionary manner and sometimes in an evolutionary manner. What made the Gita deservedly most acceptable universal spiritual message among the thinking people of the modern world is its message of God-centred life, its message of harmony, synthesis and eternal hope for all. All have a spiritual future because everyone can travel towards God through his *swadharma* (one's allotted duty) whatever may be his position in life. And if one is unable to follow a difficult spiritual path one is always welcome to choose an easier path. All paths being God's path, they all lead to God. There need be no quarrel over that. Only one must move on perpetually fighting his battle of life remembering God always मामनुस्मर युध्य च। And when one has reached God of one's life, one should work for the guidance of the less fortunate peoples of the world.

What makes Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings again so inspiring and significant is that Sri Krishna's essential message comes out again with redoubled power and fresh authentication from the life-laboratory of this younger prophet. This makes both Krishna and Ramakrishna as the revealers of each other, sustainers of each other, if of course one is not the other. In fact one is the other. So Swami Vivekananda sang :

> स्तब्धीकृत्य प्रलयकलितम्वाहवोत्थं महान्तं
> हित्वा रात्रिं प्रकृतिसहजामन्धतामिस्रमिश्राम् ।
> गीतं शान्तं मधुरमपि यः सिंहनादं जगर्ज
> सोऽयं जातः प्रथितपुरुषो रामकृष्णस्त्विदानीम् ॥
>
> He who quelled the noise, terrible like that at the time of destruction, arising from the battle (Kurukshetra), who destroyed the terrible yet natural night of ignorance (of Arjuna) and who roared out the Gita sweet and appraising — that renowned soul is born now as Sri Ramakrishna.

See the Krishna-karuna, compassion of Krishna, for jivas, his anxiety for us : The Lord is really worried about our plight :

> क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
> अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥
>
> XII, 5.

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'The task of those whose minds are set on the unmanifest is more difficult; for the ideal of the unmanifest is hard to attain for those who are embodied.'

So he comes down step by step to reach every one of us at his own level in order to give us the required spiritual lift :

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥
अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥
अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन् सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥
अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥

Gita, XII, 8-11.

'Fix your mind on Me alone, rest your thought on Me alone, and in Me alone you will live hereafter. Of this there is no doubt.

'If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me, O Dhananjaya, then seek to reach Me by yoga of constant practice.

'If you are incapable of constant practice, then devote yourself to My service. For even by rendering service to Me you will attain perfection.

'If you are unable to do even this, then self-controlled, surrender the fruit of all action, and take refuge in Me.'

See again the Ramakrishna-Karuna, compassion of Ramakrishna : When Girish Ghose the representative fallen man — who himself did not claim to have anything like a moral character and had committed sins by numbers —came to Sri Ramakrishna and fell at his feet to be done something about, Sri Ramakrishna asked him to continue to go on as he did, but only to take the name of God once in the morning and once in the evening. But, Girish, not sure that he could do it, remained silent. Then he was asked to remember God once before his food. Girish could not even then give his word. Then Sri Ramakrishna said, 'you need do nothing, only give me the power of attorney'. Girish heaved a sigh of relief.

Such is Krishna-karuna, compassion of Krishna.

Such is Ramakrishna-karuna, compassion of Ramakrishna.

Are these two different compassions? No. It is the *compassion* of the self-same Lord, coming at different yogas, time-cycles, for the redemption of the embodied souls.

Krishna and Ramakrishna. Krishna is the core of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna is the more of Krishna. And this 'more' is nothing more than what happens when Purna is added unto Purna.

'THE LORD HAS COME INTO MY DWELLING'

BY A DEVOTEE

The Lord has come into my dwelling;
My heart beats fast,
But my limbs are all benumbed,
A word I cannot utter.

My eyes are stone-bedecked,
With the stare of a statue
I look and wonder,
Not knowing how to meet Him.

Shall I fall at His feet
Or take Him by the hand and dance?
I stand and wait.

If it be His will and pleasure,
By His touch my sleeping world will awaken;
And once again
A life, turned stone, will throb,
And, twining round His lotus feet,
Will I lose myself.

Raining tears of bliss,
My eyes shall get the light
Of love that understands
Radha is Mohan.

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THE POET VIVEKANANDA

SARASWATHI GOWRISHANKAR

Sri Ramakrishna who could see into the innermost recesses of a man's heart, once said :

> Every now and then I take stock of the devotees. I find that some are like lotuses with ten petals, some like lotuses with a hundred petals. But among lotuses, Narendra is a thousand-petalled one.
>
> Other devotees may be like pots or pitchers, but Narendra is a huge water-barrel.
>
> Others may be like pools or tanks ; but Narendra is a huge reservoir like the Haldarpukur.
>
> Among fish, Narendra is a huge red-eyed carp, others are like minnows or smelts or sardines.

At the time these words were spoken, Swami Vivekananda was about twenty years old. In appearance, we are told, 'he was a dynamic youth, overflowing with vigour and vitality, having a physical frame slightly over middle height — graceful without being feminine. He had a strong jaw, suggesting his strong determination. The chest was expansive and the breadth of the head towards the front signified high mental power and development. But the most remarkable thing about him was his eyes, which Sri Ramakrishna compared to lotus petals. They were prominent but not protruding, and part of the time their gaze was indrawn, suggesting the habit of deep meditation ; their colour varied according to the feeling of the moment. Sometimes they would be luminous in profundity and sometimes they sparkled in merriment. Endowed with the native grace of an animal, he was free in his movements. He walked sometimes with slow gait and sometimes with rapidity, always a part of his mind absorbed in deep thought. And it was a delight to hear his deep resonant voice, either in conversation or in music.'

Truly, a king among men. No one who came in touch with him, failed to carry away some spark, however faint, of the fiery light that burned within him and the vast literature in many languages that has grown around his name is ample testimony to the magnitude of his rich intellectual culture.

It is of some significance to our subject to note that Swami Vivekananda's earliest interests were music and poetry, religion and philosophy ; no wonder also that his works, rich in philosophical content, constitute in their perfection of imagery and purity of language, some of the finest literature of his day. Let us recall also that he once remarked to Miss MacLeod, 'Do you not see that I am first and foremost a poet ?'

However, as we read some of Swami Vivekananda's poems, let us not forget that he was always only unconsciously a poet. Poetry to him was not a mere literary form nor even a conscious vehicle for the expression of his thoughts. To him, poetry was, as Romain Rolland says, 'a flight of faith, without which a bird becomes a mere mechanical toy'. His words, emerging from the core of his heart into this flight of faith, take on brilliant plumage like some gorgeous bird of paradise and twist and turn, now in bright sunshine, now in shadow. But the dominant theme, the keynote of these brilliant flights of fancy, as he tells us, ever remains the same : 'He (God) is the Great Poet, the Ancient Poet : the whole Universe is His Poem coming in verses and rhymes, written in Infinite Bliss.'

For these all-too brief intimate moments of self-revelation, we shall have to go to his poems. We know, for instance, that the ever-fascinating drama of Rama and Sita filled many of his childhood hours (till they were supplanted by the greater Siva) ! And surely, it is a lingering memory of childhood that has inspired the lovely little poem entitled 'Who knows how Mother plays', where he says :

> Perchance the child had glimpse
> Of shares behind the scenes,

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With eager eyes and strained,
Quivering forms — ready
To jump in front and be
Events, resistless, strong.
Who knows but Mother, how,
And where, and when, they come?
Perchance the shining sage
Saw more than he could tell;
Who knows, what soul, and when
The Mother makes her throne?
What law would freedom bind?
What merit guide Her will,
Whose freak is greatest order,
Whose will resistless law?

A whole life-time of experience — from the fairy-tale of childhood to mature faith — has passed meanwhile and Narendra did not come to this faith without a struggle.

The intellectual curiosity that was fashionable among the youth of his age added to his own intense desire to 'know' combined to annihilate within him every particle of the unquestioning faith of childhood. A terrible emptiness arose within him. Sometimes it was as though a hundred demons possessed him driving him relentlessly in pursuit of an answer to his query: 'Oh, for a philosophy that would satisfy his senses, that could mediate bodily as it were, for the soul's deliverance, a hand to save, to uplift, to protect, a Shakti outside himself who would cover his nothingness, a Master who by embodying perfection in the flesh would still the commotion in his soul.' Many, many dark days were to pass before he came to that Master.

But the dark days and nights of travail have come to us in glimpses, in poems written years later and holding captive for us in succeeding generations the poignancy of the suffering of long hours of pitiless self questioning:

Alas for me, I cannot rest. This Floating bubble, earth—
Its hollow form, its hollow name, its hollow death and birth—
For me is nothing. How I long to get beyond the crust
Of name and form: Ah, open the gates; To me they open must.

This time from a song in Bengali:

Where darkness is interpreted as light,
Where misery passes for happiness,
Where disease is pretended to be health,
Where the New-born's cry but shows 'tis alive;
Dost thou, O wise, expect happiness here?

Where war and competition ceaseless run,
Even the father turns against the son,
Where "self" "self"—this always the only note,
Dost thou, O wise, seek for peace supreme here?

Personal sorrow in the death of his father, the sudden plunge into acute poverty and the heart-breaking attempt to secure food and clothing for his brothers and sisters, have all left their mark on the iron of his soul. The fruitless journeys in search of employment, the repeated disappointments, the being turned away by erstwhile friends — uncomprehending — all these plunged him into the abyss of doubt. Reflections of these black moods occur in many places:

Thou large-hearted Lover unselfish, know,
There's no room in this sordid world for thee;
Can a marble figure e'er brook the blow
That an iron mass can afford to bear?

Couldst thou be as one inert and abject,
Honey-mouthed, but with poison in thy heart,
Destitute of truth and worshipping self,
Then thou wouldst have a place in this Samsar.

But all these troubles were as nothing, compared to the dark despair in his soul, this nothingness into which he had plunged, this agony of unbelief.

Tossed to and fro, from wave to wave in this seething surging sea
Of passions strong and sorrows deep, grief is and joy to be,
Where life is living death alas: and death—who knows but 'tis
Another start, another round of this old wheel of grief and bliss?
Where children dream bright golden dreams, too soon to find them dust,
And aye look back to hope long lost and life a mass of rust?

There seemed no ray of light in this impenetrable darkness when he was guided to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar. All that the

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Master asked from his disciple was a 'Suspension of disbelief in the Mother'. He himself would do the rest.

Then through the pages of his writings, we can trace his difficult slow journey back from the world of disbelief till he seemed to tremble upon the brink of a great discovery. It seemed ages long, this interval. Then suddenly one night, in the shrine of Kali at Dakshineswar, the veil was lifted and the glory of the Divine Mother shone forth. The light flooded his being, never again to be extinguished, seating him for ever, in the lap of the Divine Mother, inspiring him later to compose his beautiful Amba-stotram

का त्वं शुभे शिवकरे सुखदुःखहस्ते

especially the triumphant last sloka :

She, who, since birth, has ever led me on
Through paths of trouble to perfection's goal,
Mother-wise in Her own sweet, playful ways;
She, who has always through my life inspired
My understanding; She, my Mother: She,
The All is my resort, whether my work
O'erflow with full fruition or with none . . .

There is no rest, it is said, for the soul that aspires to be one with God. Again and again Narendra importuned his Master to give him taste of deeper pleasure and steadily the Master led him by invisible paths to the highest pinnacle of the spiritual path, till he could in truth sing of that state of mind,

When all the many movements of the mind,
Are, by Thy grace, made one, and unified,
The Light of that unfoldment is so great
That, in its splendour, it surpasses far
The brilliance of ten thousand suns.
Then sooth, the sun of Chit reveals itself.
And melt away the sun and moon and stars,
High heaven above, the nether worlds, and all:
This universe seems but a tiny pool
Held in a hollow caused by some Cow's hoof.
——This is the reaching of the region which
Beyond the plane of the External lies.

But still there was no rest, for he felt he was intended for a greater purpose than mere personal liberation. The passing of Sri Ramakrishna left him groping for a distinct message; repeatedly too, the wander-lust seized him:

Pledging even life for gaining knowledge,
I have devoted half my days on earth;
For the sake of love, ev'n as one insane,
I have often clutched at Shadows, lifeless;

For religion, many creeds have I sought,
Lived in mountain-caves, on cremation grounds,
By the Ganges and other sacred streams,
And how many days have I passed on alms:

Friendless, clad in rags, with no possession.
Feeding from door to door on what chance would bring.
The frame broken under Tapasya's weight;
What riches, ask thou, have I earned in life?

Time and again he was tempted to seek shelter at the feet of another — Pavhari Baba — but something held him back on each occasion; until at last, the compassionate face of his Master shone through the mist and he was able to sing in the most touching words —

Like to the playing of a little child
Is ev'ry attitude of mine toward Thee.
Even, at times, I dare be angered with Thee;
Yet there, in greyest gloom of darkest night,
Yet there, with speechless mouth and tearful eyes,
Thou standest fronting me, and Thy sweet Face
Stoops down with loving look on face of mine.
Then instantly, I turn me back to Thee,
And at Thy feet I fall on bended knees.
I crave no pardon at Thy gentle hands,
For Thou art never angry with Thy son.
Who else with all my foolish Freaks would bear?
Thou art my Master: Thou my soul's real mate.
Many a time I see Thee,—I am Thee:
Aye: I am thee, and Thou my Lord, art me:

From then on, he had no more doubts. He knew what his path was, what he had been ordained to do. His was not to be the quiet joy of the contemplative's union with the Beloved:

This is your road — a painful road and drear
I made the stones that never give you rest.
I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear
And he shall come like you unto My breast.
But you, My child, must travel here.

This is your task. It has no joy nor grace
But it is not meant for any other hand,
And in My universe hath measured place,
Take it. I do not bid you understand.
I bid you close your eyes to see My face.

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Slowly he began to comprehend the inexorable message of the face behind the mist that spoke of 'The Living God':

He who is in you and outside you,
Who works through all hands,
Who walks on all feet,
Whose body are all ye,
Him worship, and break all other idols!

He who is at once the high and low,
The sinner and the saint,
Both God and Worm,
Him worship — visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,
Break all other idols!

In whom is neither past life
Nor future birth nor death
In whom we always have been
And always shall be one,
Him worship. Break all other idols!

Ye fools: who neglect the living God,
And his infinite perfections with which the world is full,
While ye run after imaginary shadows,
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
Him worship, the only visible:
Break all other idols!

There was now a complete identification of his personality with the poverty, suffering and sorrows of his countrymen, indeed, of the whole world. He could partake of the griefs of millions because he was himself one with them:

Not two nor many. 'tis but One,
And thus in me all ones I have,
I cannot hate, I cannot shun,
Myself from me — I can but love!

And the thought came to him,

These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.

No more personal religion but the clarion call to 'Eternal Love and Service Free', no Truth but this, no dream but that of 'men and women, with uplifted head —

Behold, their shackles broken and know
In springing joy, their life renewed.'

Through the freedom of his own personality, he had arrived at last at the point when he could tell himself as in his famous 'Song of the Sannyasin':

Few only know the truth. The rest will hate
And laugh thee, great one; but pay no heed.
Go thou, the free, from place to place, and help
Them out of darkness, Maya's veil. Without
The fear or pain or search for pleasure, go
Beyond them both, Sannyasin bold: Say —
'Om Tat Sat, Om'.

Yet through all the bustle of the organisation of social work into which he now plunged, his inner mind continued to be filled with thoughts of the Mother of all creation. Was not all life Her play, creation itself and even the void before creation?

Therefore, in one or two famous poems, we come across the manifestation of the rapture of the mystic poet communing with the Divine in a storm-tossed world, where self has vanished and time itself is annihilated.

The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant,
In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics,
Just loose from the prison house,
Wrenching trees by the roots,
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
And swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky.
The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death, begrimed and black—
Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy.
Come, Mother, come!
For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou 'Time', the All-Destroyer,
Come, O Mother, come.
Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.

Not for him is the superficial religion of the 'good men of the world' who

Garland Thee with skulls, but shrink back
In fright and call Thee 'O All Merciful'.

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At Thy thunder peal of awful laughter,
At Thy nudeness — for space is Thy garment,
Their hearts sink down with terror but they say,
'It is the demons that the Mother kills'.
They only pretend they wish to see Thee,
But when the time comes, at Thy sight they flee.

For himself, he was strong enough to see 'the form terrible of the Mother' and could tell himself:

Awake, O hero. Shake off thy vain dreams,
Death stands at thy head—does fear become thee?
A load of misery, true though it is—
This becoming—know this to be thy God.
His temple, the Shmashan among corpses
And funeral pyres; unending battle—
That verily is His sacred worship;
Constant defeat—let that not unnerve thee;
Shattered be little self, hope, name and fame;
Set up a pyre of them and make thy heart
A burning ground.
And let Shyama dance there.

Yet, the strong physical frame was shattered by the great demands his life had made upon it; he wearied at last of this ceaseless round of activity and his voice, once a clarion call, grows now plaintive as that of a child who, weary at dusk with day-long play, begins to run to the shelter of his mother's arms:

Open the gates of light; O Mother, to me Thy tired son.
I long, oh, long to return home; Mother, my play is done.

SRI VIDYARANYA ON ISWARA AND JIVA

R. S. N. RAMAKRISHNAN

Sri Vidyaranya Swami in the *Chitradipa* of *Panchadasi,* did not follow the ancient method of classifying the Chaitanya or the Supreme Spirit — as (1) Jiva, (2) Iswara and (3) pure Chaitanya. He found out a new classification of the same into a four-fold manner as (1) Kutastha, (2) Jiva, (3) pure Chaitanya and (4) Iswara. Kutastha is the Chaitanya limited by the two bodies, gross and subtle. It is compared to the ether limited by a pot. Jiva is the reflected image of Chaitanya in the subtle body, antah-karana and is compared to the image of the ether in the water in the pot. The pure Chaitanya is the unlimited, like the ether at large. And Iswara is the reflection of Chaitanya in the avidya qualified by the antah-karana-vasanas or the impressions of the intellects of all beings. He is compared to the reflection of the ether in the clouds which are constituted of minute water particles.

It is also said in the *Chitradipa,* that the Jiva who shines as 'I' is wrongly apprehended just as silver is apprehended in shell. That is, 'I' is held to be the adhyasta or the fallacious entity.

Here one may raise an objection thus: A shell in view is wrongly apprehended as silver only when the shell which is the substrate of the fallacious silver, is known in its general nature 'this-ness', and is unknown in its specific nature, 'shell-ness'. Similarly what is there that is regarded as the substrate of the adhyasta 'I', that is known in its general quality and is unknown in its special quality?

In reply to this, it is said that, like silver on shell, 'I' is wrongly supposed upon the Kutastha which is unknown in its special nature, 'blissful-ness'.

Again it may be opposed that though, like shell-ness in shell, the special nature, 'blissful-ness' is said to be unknown in the Kutastha, what is the general nature known there like 'this-ness' in shell? Further, the general quality of the adhisthana or the substrate of adhyasta (e.g. 'this-ness' of the shell) and the special quality of the adhyasta ('silver-ness' of silver) are found to be apprehended together in the wrong apprehension 'This is silver'. But in the case of the illusory 'I' the special quality 'I-ness' alone is perceived.

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So it is unjust to admit 'I' as the adhyasta or the fallacious entity.

The above opposition is silenced in the following manner: Kutastha, which is the adhisthana of 'I' has swayamtwam or self-hood in its general nature. Hence the general quality of the adhisthana ('self-hood' of Kutastha) and the special quality of the adhyasta (I-ness of 'I') are found to be apprehended together in the empirical usages —'I go myself' and 'He goes himself', just as 'this-ness' and 'silver-ness' are found to be so in the usage, 'This is silver'. 'I-ness' is indeed the special quality of the adhyasta soul who shines as 'I' since the word 'I' is found to be used by one only in mentioning his own soul and never in mentioning another. The 'self-hood' also can be predicated as the general quality of the adhisthana (Kutastha); because in the empirical usages — 'I go myself', 'You go yourself' and 'He goes himself' it is found that the 'self-hood' unlike 'I-ness' is common to and constant in all the adhyastas 'I', 'You' and 'He'.

A person due to delusion apprehends the shell in view as silver. But he is able to discriminate shell from silver on hearing the words of a trustworthy person who points out to him that the object in view is only a shell and not a silver. Likewise it is also possible for one to discriminate Kutastha from 'I', on the evidence of the Mandukya sruti which declares Kutastha as indestructible and which declares 'I', on the contrary, as destructible.

If according to the Mandukya sruti Jiva is admitted as destructible then one may advance an opposition thus: The words 'this' and 'that' in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta' have the grammatical co-ordination or the same case termination. Accordingly they denote the identity of Devadatta belonging to a particular place and to a particular time, with Devadatta belonging to the place in view and to the present time. Similarly the words 'Aham' or 'I' and 'Brahma' or 'Supreme' in the sentence 'Aham Brahmasmi' should also denote the identity between the soul and the Supreme. As such the Supreme which is indestructible by nature has to be admitted to have been declared, in the Sruti, as identical with the destructible 'I'.

The above objection is refuted in the following manner: Though the words 'this' and 'that' in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta' denote the identity as said above, yet in the sentence 'Yoyam stanuresha puman' (That this pillar is this man) the words which have the same case termination do not denote the identity, but on the contrary they denote the negation of it. It will not be just to admit that they identify the illusory pillar with the empirically real man, in view. Hence in the sentence 'Aham Brahma asmi' the words 'aham' and 'Brahma' which have the same case termination need not denote the identity. And in conformity with the Mandukya Sruti they should be supposed to mean only the negation of identity of the 'I' with the Supreme.

If we admit in accordance with the Vivarana view that the words 'aham' and 'Brahma' in the sentence 'aham Brahma asmi' denote only the identity, then the word 'I' should be presumed to indicate indirectly the indestructible Kutastha.

Sri Vidyaranya has shown a sentence '*sushuptasthana ekibhutah* etc.' in the Mandukya Sruti as the authority for admitting that Iswara is the reflection of Chaitanya in the vasanas. According to that sentence Iswara comes to be known as identical with Anandamaya who is the Blissful in the state of sleep when all the antah-karanas cling to their original state and remain in the form of mere vasanas or impressions. Each vasana, like its effect, is capable of manifesting each object. All the objects can be made manifest by all the vasanas of all beings. Hence sarvajnatwam or omniscience is quite possible for Iswara who being declared as identical with Anandamaya is said to have all the vasanas as His adjunct.

There is a strong opposition against admitting the definition of Iswara as the reflection of Chaitanya in the nescience qualified by the vasanas of all beings because Iswara is accept-

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ed to be identical with Anandamaya or the Blissful in the state of sleep.

What is it that is held as adjunct of Iswara? Is it the bare avidya or the avidya qualified by all the vasanas or all the bare vasanas or each vasana? The bare avidya cannot be accepted to be the adjunct; for it will run counter to the statement in the *Chitradipa* that Iswara is the reflection of Chaitanya in the vasanas. Neither the second nor the third alternative can be admitted as the adjunct because all the vasanas of all beings cannot exist together in the avidya during the sleep-state which does not take place at the same time to all beings. Regarding the fourth alternative if we admit that each vasana is the adjunct of God it will lead to accepting as many Iswaras as there are vasanas.

Here it should be borne in mind that Sri Appaya Dikshit exhibits that Sri Vidyaranya has revealed in the Brahmananda Grantha, that Anandamaya is only Jiva and not Iswara. So the above-mentioned opposition which results only from the acceptance of the identity between Iswara and Anandamaya will be put to silence. One may think that such revelation in the Brahmananda Grantha is against the Mandukya Sruti, '*sushuptasthana ekibhutah* etc.' which declares identity between Iswara and Anandamaya. But the answer is as follows: Sri Vidyaranya, in his Brahmananda Grantha, is said to have stated that the pure Chaitanya is manifested in six forms — three belonging to God and three belonging to Jiva. Its Divine forms are (1) Antaryami, (2) Hiranyagarbha, and (3) Virat. When It has sense of self in the entire gross world, It is called Virat. When It has conceit in the whole subtle world It is called Hiranyagarbha. And when It has the subtler elements (vasanas) in the Maya or Avidya as Its adjunct, It is called Antaryami.

Similarly, the three forms manifested by Chaitanya as Jiva, are — (1) Anandamaya or Prajna, (2) Taijasa, and (3) Viswa. When during sleep the antah-karana clings to its original vasana-state It witnesses the avidya, and has the vasanas as Its adjunct. In this state It is called Anandamaya or prajna. When It, during dream state, has conceit in the particular subtle body It is called Taijasa. When It, during waking state, has conceit in the particular gross body It is Viswa. These three forms and pure Chaitanya are said to be implied in the sentence '*soyamatma chatushpat*' of the Mandukya Sruti as the four padas of Jiva. The succeeding mantras mention what those padas are. Of them, the first mantra, instead of mentioning the swarupa or form belonging to Jiva as Visva declares on the contrary the divine form, viz. Vaiswanara or Virat. Such declaration is only to persuade the aspirants of weak intellect to meditate in the following manner. They should first apprehend that the three, viz. Virat, Viswa and Matra A are one and the same, then the other three, viz. Hiranyagarbha, Taijasa and Matra U are one and thereupon the three, viz. Antaryami, Anandamaya and Matra M are identical with one another. Further they should comprehend the aforesaid second triad as identical with the first triad, then the third as identical with the second and lastly the Supreme with the third.

From what have been said so far it may have become clear that the Mandukya Sruti '*sushuptasthana ekibhutah* etc.' does not recognise the real identity between Iswara and Anandamaya and so is not contradicted by the statement of Sri Vidyaranya Swami in his Brahmananda Grantha, the last chapters of the Panchadasi.

Sri Vidyaranya regards the above Sruti as the authority for admitting that Iswara is the reflection of Chaitanya in the nescience qualified by the vasanas. This will be justified only if that Sruti is viewed to declare that Iswara is identical with Anandamaya who is the reflection of Chaitanya in his adjunct avidya qualified by vasanas. But Sri Vidyaranya, on the contrary, accepts the Sruti as declaring the difference between them. How then is this passage regarded by him as the authority there? Here the answer is thus: Among the three forms manifested by the Supreme as Jiva, the Viswa form is included in the Virat; because

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it has close similarity with that Divine form, in respect of its having the sthula or gross element as upadhi. Similarly the Taijasa form is said to be included in the Divine form Hiranyagarbha since both of them are similar in having the sukshma or subtle elements as their upadhi. Similarly Anandamaya who has sukshmatara or subtler elements (vasanas) as his adjunct is included in the Antaryami Iswara. Accordingly we come to know that the import of the Sruti is that Iswara too like Anandamaya has vasanas as His adjunct.

This Antaryami Iswara is the reflection of Chaitanya in the avidya qualified by the vasanas of all beings in pralaya, Deluge. When He willed to become many He changed Himself into the shape of Hiranyagarbha, just as sleep transforms into dream. Hiranyagarbha is said to appear in the form of subtle elements of this entire Universe. All these gross elements of this whole world are the manifestations of Virat who is only the altered state of Hiranyagarbha. As such all these gross and subtle elements are only the altered state of the Antaryami Iswara who is said to be the material and efficient cause of this world. This Antaryami Iswara is present in all these His altered forms just as gold is found to be present in all its altered forms.

Now passing on to the view exhibited by Sri Vidyaranya in the *Drik-drisya-viveka* we come to know that Jiva is classified into three varieties, viz. Paramarthika or eternal, Vyavaharika or empirically real and Pratibhasika or existing only in appearance. Paramarthika Jiva is the Chaitanya limited by the two bodies, gross and subtle. The word 'Aham' in the sentence 'Aham Brahma asmi' has reference to this Paramarthika Jiva who is eternal as the Supreme. So lakshana or secondary signification of the word 'aham' is avoided. The reflected Chaitanya in the antah-karana which due to the obscuration of Paramarthika Jiva by Maya has conceit in the antah-karana is called the Vyavaharika Jiva. Pratibhasika Jiva is he who has conceit in the body created by the defect, Nidra which is the particular altered state of Maya.

SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

(*Continued from the last issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Jhandu Bhatji

I have already said that when I first came to Jamnagar, Bhatji was not there, he was out on professional practice. When he came back I met him at Dhanwantari Dham. I had heard that Bhatji's bounty had no parallel.

Sometime before he came to see me at Shethji's house Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had left this mortal world and his biography had been published. He pressed me to have a copy and paid money for it and when it arrived he would go everyday to Shethji's place to hear me read it. Whenever he heard an instance of Vidyasagar's munificence he would burst into tears. At Jamnagar Swamiji had met Bhatji. There the song "*Dayanidhe teri gati lakhi na pare*" from his lips made Bhatji shed tears. Swamiji would say, 'I have been to many places and have seen many a bountiful person, but nowhere have I seen a generous man like Jhandu Bhat Viththalji.'

For sometime Bhatji had practised Yoga and observed great strictness in his ways. He would dine, he would clean himself exactly at the appointed time. One day as he was hearing reading from Vidyasagar's life his time of cleansing slipped by. The saying is 'The Yogi is like the patient (*yogi jyaysa rogi*).' That one day's breach made him ill and he suffered for a long time.

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On coming to Bhatji's house I found it to be as good as a hospital. It was filled with patients suffering from cough, asthma, fever and other ailments. They were given medicine and diet.

Bhatji would leave his bed at 4 a.m. He would then have his daily worship. Next he would sit in his outer apartment. People would then throng there, have their tea and prescription for diseases. Bhatji not only prescribed but also gave away free, to the poor and the rich alike, all medicines including makaradhwaja worth Rs. 80 a tollah from his dispensary outside the house.

When the clock struck nine he would drive his Tom Tom (a carriage drawn by one horse) himself and go about seeing his patients without a fee. Once Bhatji was appointed for the treatment of the Thakur Saheb of Oadhoan who was a victim of Phthisis. I have heard from people that when Bhatji was bidding farewell Thakur Saheb placed before Bhatji seven bags, each containing a thousand rupees, and said, 'This is not your fee but a paltry sum to meet the cost of the medicines you gave me. You could not help me, I do not mind that. My disease is incurable'. Bhatji cried aloud and said, 'Our Sastra (system of medicine) says that if a disease be properly diagnosed, the patient never dies. I failed in the diagnosis in your case. So my treatment ends in failure. If the country were ruled by a Hindu King I would be punished. Still you offer me a reward! How can I accept it?' Bhatji came back weeping. He was then in debt for about a lakh of rupees. The prince of Jamnagar offered to clear off the debt but Bhatji would not accept his help.

I have heard another story. One day a Brahmin came to beg at Bhatji's house with 'Jai Raghunathji (Glory to Rama, the scion of the race of Raghu)' in his lips. Such Brahmins carry a bag with ten openings. The ten packets are filled with rice, pulse, flour etc.

In Bhatji's yard there lay a heap of used plates. As the Brahmin saw nobody nearby he secretly took up a used cup and thrust it into a pocket of his bag. The Brahmin was stealing out, but Bhatji had seen the whole thing from an upper story. He called him up and said, 'Sir, leave the bag there and have your seat on this bed'. The Brahmin was cowed down. Bhatji said to a servant, 'Bring here eatables on a new plate and new cup and a new bowl and a new tumbler too'. The servant at once obeyed.

The Brahmin thought, 'Bhatji has not surely detected me; I am safe'. He was going to put the contents into his bag and as he was about to take up the bag, Bhatji said, 'You need not bring the bag, all these are meant for you. Certainly you are in want of utensils or why should you take an unwashed cup? We are to blame, we who do not keep ourselves informed of your wants. You please take away all these'. With tears in his eyes the Brahmin held the feet of Bhatji and said, 'Are you a man or a God?' Since then the Brahmin led a changed life.

One day I came back after a walk to see that an ugly looking Brahmin, with ringworms all over, lay on Bhatji's own bed and a woman rubbed oil on his body. Bhatji sat near him, turning the leaves of a book on Ayurveda.

On my asking, 'What is this, Bhatji', he replied, 'this man is a nymphomaniac. The Ayurveda prescribes that such a person should be laid in a soft bed in the presence of the physician with a woman rubbing oil on his body. I have done so and am looking for the remedy'. 'All right', said I, 'but why on your bed?' 'It would take time to have another soft bed, so I have done this'.

Forthwith that maniac was taken as a member of the family.

As Bhatji took long to be cured of the disease described earlier, he went out for a change to stay in a bungalow in the open field and there he took me with him.

One day, after our noon-day meal, we were washing our face and hands when we heard the wailing of a woman far in the field. I understood nothing. But Bhatji lost no time in running to the place with his wooden slippers on. I waited for him in the room.

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When he returned his face was flushed and he was perspiring. 'How is this', said I, 'where have you been?' 'In the meadow', said Bhatji, 'a woman had collected cowdung and was praying to a passer-by to help her to raise the load on to her head. But the man paid no heed to it'. Even from a distance Bhatji knew that the woman was in distress and ran to her help. He was then between sixty and seventy.

Lesson on the vow of service and its inception

A verse was on Bhatji's lips, I have forgotten it. Its import is, I do not hanker after that heaven or Vaikuntha where I may not have an opportunity to serve or do good to a man.* Once the verse of Bhatji in my lips brought tears in the eyes of Swamiji. That the best thing in man's life is to serve man and to love man—the life of Bhatji brought home this truth to me. I found great joy in nursing this great man in his sick bed.

In a haunted house at Khambhalia

After recovery Bhatji went back home. A Bhatiya Sheth now brought his ailing wife to Jamnagar for treatment. He once proposed, 'Please come with me to Khambhalia, where many a millionaire had his birth and did noble deeds.

I came there with the Sheth (banker). For want of accommodation in his house I was given a large solitary house to stay in. I spent the nights there alone. I lay in a room on the first floor. The only outlet was a square aperture on the floor. The stairs to the ground floor was fitted into it. It had to be covered with two boards moving on wheels. If they were drawn together they covered the hole and became level with the floor. In English it is called a trap-door and there it is called a Dadara. Such trap-doors are there at every big house in Gujarat and Kathiawad.

One night I had closed the outer gate and lay on the floor leaving the Dadara open. Nobody had any way of getting into the house. I felt drowsy and had just shut my eyes when I saw a very ugly person together with two or three goats going round me and attempting in vain to push me. He could not lay hands on me. There was a burning ember near by. I opened my eyes. The ugly fellow sat at a distance, but as the light was dim his face could not be clearly seen. With my eyes open I could see neither the goats nor the ember. 'Who is there?' I shouted two or three times. But as there was no reply I went towards him to seize him, but he faded away.

I came down and searched minutely, but could not trace him. The main gate was closed. If it had been a man, how could he have come in and got out? I then went up and sat on the bed. I recited aloud *Ramarakshastavaraja* and said, 'My friend, if you be a spirit, I am your guest. The few days I stay here please treat me as a guest and do me no harm'.

Next morning I reported to people my experience of the night and they said, 'The house has earned the notoriety of being haunted. Now that you have seen it, we are certain. Come, you shall stay at another house'. As I did not agree, an old man

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* In his after life the author often said that the verse was probably this:

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं नापुनर्भवम्
कामये दुःखतप्तानां प्राणिनामार्तिनाशनम्।

He had the intention of writing the memoirs of Mahamahopadhyay Pandit Hathibhai Sastri of Jamnagar. But his plan was not carried out. We requested the Pandit to write something about the author. He sent a reply in Hindi, an English rendering whereof is given below:

'Swami Sri Akhandanandaji, the saint merged in Brahman, stayed in the laboratory of Jhandu Bhatji and often came to my house with him. The following verse ascribed to Rantideva, was always on Jhandu Bhatji's lips.

को नु स स्यात् उपायोऽत्र येनाहं सर्वदेहिनाम्।
अन्तः प्रविश्य सततं भवेयं दुःखभारभाक्॥

(Is there any way in this world whereby I may get into the bodies of beings and suffer myself all their troubles?) Swami Akhandanandaji too took this verse as a motto. It clearly revealed his pity for suffering humanity and his desire for removing their distress.

Sastri Hathibhai Harisankar—23-4-37.

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offered to sleep with me. To that too I did not agree. I resided in that house for five days after the incident, but never more did I see anything.

From Jamnagar to Nadiad, Bhavnagar, Bombay

After a direct acquaintance with the doings of the Bhatiyas I came back to Jamnagar. After a few days I accompanied Bhatji to the village Kundala in Baroda State. Here we parted; Bhatji went back home and I to Bhavnagar.

On my way through Palitana, the holy place for the Jains, I saw marvels of Jain architecture on the Shatrunjaya Hill. At Bhavnagar I got the information that Swamiji had left for America. I stayed here for about a fortnight and then started for Bombay. On the way I stopped at Nadiad for a few days at the house of Haridasbhai Viharidas, Diwan of the Nawab of Junagarh. There I stayed with Bhikkshu Krishnananda and had discussions on the Vedas with him. Haridasbhai Viharidas was a rich Zamindar and a devotee of Swamiji.

From Nadiad I came to Poona with Rakhal Haldar, a devotee of the Master. I came back to Bombay, where I received a letter from Rakhal Maharaj, and started for Abu Road to meet him.

Meeting of Gurubhais at Abu Road

At the Abu Road station I met Swami Brahmananda and Swami Turiyananda. Here Brahmanandaji asked me, 'Do you know why Swamiji has gone to America?' When I confessed my ignorance he went on, 'While travelling on the Western Ghat hills and the land of the Mahrattas, Swamiji saw the sufferings and poverty of the common people and the tyranny of the rich, and shed tears. He said, "My brothers, with so much suffering, so much poverty, this country is not ready to accept our preaching of religion. If I ever am able to remove this distress then shall I preach religion. It is for this that I am going to the land of Kuvera (God of Wealth). Let me see if I can find a way out".'

We halted for three or four days at Abu Road station and then all three of us left for Jaipur. There we stayed almost a month at the house of Harisingh Ladkhani and visited every place worth seeing.

Swami Brahmananda gave me this advice, 'You have dyspepsia and a bad cough. For a cure of both the diseases Rajputana is a suitable place. The Raja of Khetri is a disciple of Swamiji and much devoted to him. I shall send word to him, you just go there and you will be cordially received.'

(*To be continued.*)

THE ONE AND THE MANY

SUBRAHMANYA BHARATI

This world is one:
Male, female, men and gods,
Snakes, birds, wind and seas.
life and death — these are one.
Sun, wall, fly and water-falls
Hair and gold — these are one.
Pleasure, pain, songs,
Dhobi, sparrows, lightning and cotton —
these are one.
The idiot and the genius,
Iron and the cricket —
these are one.
Vedas, fish, tempest and jasmine —
these are the myriad manifestations of the one
and the same.
All that exist are one.
And the name of this One is 'Self'
Self is divine.
Self is nectar.
Self is eternal.

(*Translated from Tamil by R. S. Murti.*)

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GURU ARJUN'S 'PSALM OF BLISS'

(*Translated by Harkrishan Singh* : Continued from the August issue.)

IV

Sloka

O thoughtless ignoramus being
Devoid of knowledge, light and seeing,
Remember Him and Him extol,
That Godhead who created thee
From dust, a moving figure of soul.
Keep him in heart unceasingly,
For, Nanak says, no company
Save His shall ever bide with thee.

Ashtapadi

(1)

O mortal man, sing greatnesses
Of Ram, repeat His qualities,
Who raised thee from poor dusty source
To fine shape of vibrating force.
The Lord who having edified
Arrayed thy form, then beautified,
Who from the fiery pangs of birth
Raised thee, brightened to world thy worth ;
In childhood, things that thou didst crave
And body-building milk, who gave,
Who in thy youth provided ease
And keen intelligence that sees ;
When started fading life's young laughter
And years were bidding thee goodbye
He who through kith and kin looked after
Thee, fed thy mouth most tenderly ;
O fool, thou bringest not His Grace
And Love to value. Nanak says :
Lord, all his wrongs and faults forgive
So that Thy Love he see and live.

(2)

Whose Grace has made thee live on earth
In health and happiness and mirth,
By whom thou dwellest with thy brothers,
With sons and wife and friends and others ;
By whose good Grace the things that scatter
Thou usest ; drinkest cold pure water,
Enjoy'st cool breeze that freshens all,
Fire priceless at thy beck and call ;
By whom thou dost luxuriate
In sensual tastes and world-desires
With paraphernalia small and great
That thy this earthly life requires ;
Hands, feet to act, and ears for hearing,
Two eyes to see, and tongue to taste,
Who gave thee, — such a Lord forswearing,
In other men thy love to vest :
Such thought-devoid defects take hold
Of thee, ridiculous man most blind.
Now, Nanak says, O Hari kind,
Clasp all in Thy Protection's fold.

(3)

In Him, who guards thy breath and worth,
From early moments of thy birth
Until thy life-days peak away,
Why dost thou not love's confidence lay.
By serving whom with heart made fine
Man wins the realisations nine,
O fool in such a Lord Divine,
Thou fixest not affection thine !
O sightless, due to ignorance bar,
Thou think'st the Everpresent far,
Who's Idol of thy contemplation
Always with thee in close relation.
Alone by serving Hari can
Be Praise found in His Mansion high,
But thou remov'st his memory
From mind, forgetful ignorant man !
O Lord Benevolent, he has
Been ever forgetful, committer of fault,
Yet Thou, O Grace unending, shalt
Protect and save him, Nanak says.

(4)

O man, thou throw'st off gems and runnest
After the glare and glitter of shells,
Whatever is pure and true thou shunnest,
Increasest love with what is false.
What thou must give up, transient,
Thou deem'st abiding, permanent,
But what exists, the things that are
And shall be, thou deem'st nought or far.
For things which thou shalt after all
Forfeit, thou drudgest, frettest ; and

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Forsakest Him, the Lord, who shall
Stand by thee, give thee saviour Hand.
Thou deck'st thy front with sandalwood signs
Then rubst them off; thou dost remain
Impure like donkey who resigns
Himself to the love of mud and stain.
Man is swift-gliding, Nanak says,
Deep down the dreadful pitch-dark well,
Now pull him out of it, O Grace
Benevolent, ineffable.

(5)

With human face and form, thou days
And nights dost deeds of animals,
By show and ostentations false
Thou seekest people's plastered praise;
Behind thy charming and masked face,
Concealest Maya's mud and dark,
Strivest to hide thy weaknesses
But canst not veil wiles clear and stark;
Outwardly keepest show of lore,
Knowledge, ablutions, meditations,
But, closed to gaze, in colour of gore
Is let loose dog of flaming passions.
Outside on body is ash besmeared,
Within burns fire of angered emotion,
Around the neck stones' load is reared,
How canst thou cross world's spanless ocean?
Within whose heart's profundities
Himself the Lord Divine resides,
Says Nanak, truly that man bides
In spontaneous state of silent bliss.

(6)

What way a man devoid of hearing
Can comprehend what others speak?
We say that night is at its peak,
He understands the noon is nearing.
How can word-rhythms the dumb pronounce
Or poetic metres articulate?
In many modes he may try to state
But break down music's measures and tones.
How can the lame think of a stroll
On top of hills and mountains high,
For answer not his legs the call
To climb, although his heart reply.
Means to each fitness is to pray
To Thee, Benevolent Creator;
Thy Grace makes cross life-sea; 'tis greater
Than all world-things, doth Nanak say.

(7)

Sole God who shall thy helper be
Thou bringest not to memory,
But one who acts thy enemy
With him thy heart's affections lie.
Of sand thou mak'st thy house for dwelling
Which shall not take much time for falling,
Thy whole life thou dost flitter and waste
Away in Maya's tempting taste.
Thy love with body deemest thou
Ever abiding, permanent;
O fool, one thought thou hast not spent
On truth: once death shall strike its blow.
In hatred and hostility,
Lust, anger and infatuation,
Sin, avarice and sense-temptation,
Falsehood and vice and treachery,
Indulging, thou hast left behind
Birth after birth innumerable;
Now Nanak lifts his prayer call,
Save man, O God, Most Gracious, Kind.

(8)

The Idol of my Love Thou art,
To Thee prayer rises from my heart;
This being and this body mine
Are all bestowed by Thee, art Thine.
Thou art our mother, father; we
Are children Thine; and in Thy Grace
Abound, O Lord of Benignity,
All Pleasure, Ease and Happiness.
O none has known the limit of
Thy vastness, Verity and Love;
O Lord, to welkins infinite
Rise ever the summits of Thy height.
The whole of world is knit in Thy
Well-ordered fine integrity,
Existence on the move or still
Is bodied obedience of Thy Will.
Thy principle, Thy movement's flow,
Thy Action's Law, sole Thou dost know.
Nanak, Thy humble devotee
For ever feels self-offered to Thee.

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चरैवेति

"WHERE WISDOM AND THE GODS LEAD"

Travel is useful in many ways. In the first place, it brings new experiences. Not all of them may be pleasant. But when taken in the right spirit, even difficult situations can be turned to one's advantage. The challenges they offer can be made the occasions for summoning all one's talents and dormant faculties. Surely such regrouping of one's energies enriches the personality and helps to stabilise it. In the second place, travel becomes the means of conveying to others the best elements of the culture one has inherited and imbibed. The humble and egoless serve as the best carriers. The egoistic and the arrogant, as we must have often seen, spoil the gifts they carry because of packing them in their own defective mental stuff. If, however, the traveller remains at heart a modest, eager, and thankful student, his movements will more or less resemble those of the common bee. He will silently suck in precious honey from every flower on which he alights. He will also, at the same time, — with no extra effort to, or adverse after-effect in, himself — fertilize anything suitably conditioned he may meet on the way.

A really wise man's travel functions like an 'exhibition' tour in the highest sense. His actions, speech, even his facial expressions will reveal the virtues habitual to him. His character will shine through his looks and general carriage, like attractive goods displayed behind shop-room windows. Any passer by can easily see if he cares to cast a glance. Do we not recall to mind what Yadu felt and did on watching the Avadhūta? That latter was 'roaming fearlessly', perfectly unconcerned as to what people thought about him. They might think he was an 'idiot, a lunatic, or a ghoul'. For he did not work or exert in the least, as most people did and do, 'with the motive of gaining longevity, fame and prosperity'. And yet any discerning man could feel his eminence. For in the midst of the multitude running hither and thither, 'scorched by the forest-fire of lust and greed', he appeared to remain far away from all heat, 'like an elephant in the midst of Ganges water'.*

* * *

To return to the story of Apollonius of Tyana: There was a period of intensive preparations before the sage could manage to free himself for extensive travels. The first thing he did was to decide not to marry, although 'in accordance with the teachings of Pythagoras he did not discourage marriage in others'. There were many more problems to be faced. One was the recurring question: 'Had he yet found himself — and, in himself, God?' That could be answered only by a rigorous course of 'contemplation and silent colloquy with the unseen'. To facilitate this, he embarked upon a vow of silence for five years. We are familiar with examples of the 'wandering preacher' or the 'nomad camel-driver' retiring into solitude and drawing inspiration under the 'starlit' skies. But it is a different thing altogether to attempt silence 'in the market-place of a clamorous semi-Oriental city', — as Apollonius did. We may well imagine that many a time there was the temptation to 'break into reproof or argument'. But he never 'spoke a single word'. His teacher had once asked him why he had not used his abilities to 'write a book'. Apollonius had then replied: 'Because I have not yet learned to keep silent'. That stage was now successfully passed. The crowd must have jeered in the beginning. But soon they would have changed their attitude 'before the majestic dignity of the sage'. We are told that something more happened. For he was even able to 'converse, teach, and even quell a civil riot by using merely gestures and the expressive dignity of eye and mien'. Wherever he was, he remained receptive to all that took place

* *Last Message of Sri Krishna*: ch. ii. 25-29.

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before him, and his memory stored all that was worthy.

The period of silence was followed aptly by one of preaching, teaching, and writing. This was gone through in Syria, his residence being in a temple in one of the towns. Due to his studies and concentration, his manner had become 'authoritative'. He did not adopt the Socratic 'guise of pretended ignorance'. He acted rather like a Lawgiver, determined to 'instruct the multitude in the truths of which he was convinced'. His listeners were familiar with the style of the Sophists who accepted the position that 'there are two sides to everything'. They found it strange when Apollonius commenced assertion of a 'single unarguable truth' every time.

Syria was the home of diverse cults then. Not being a bigot, Apollonius kept himself in touch with all of them. He would never condemn to 'eternal flames' people who did not believe as he did. On the contrary, he aimed at eliciting the truth from every sincere belief. His object was to synthesize, not to overthrow, — to transform empty observances into the genuine 'pursuit of virtue'†

Apollonius had by this time assimilated the best that the Greek world could give him. But he was not satisfied. He yearned to have his wisdom 'first hand'. He felt he could have it only from its 'springs' in distant India. And to India he accordingly directed his steps.

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

† The whole section dealing with Apollonius is a summary of Dr Schnur's account in *Mystic Rebels*, published by The Beechhurst Press, New York.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Maithilyananda was formerly Editor, *Prabuddha Bharata.*

Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan is Professor of Philosophy, Madras University.

Prof. K. Panchapagesan, well known as a scholar on Advaita Philosophy, is a retired Professor of Mathematics.

Prof. S. Rajagopala Sastri is Head of the Department of Philosophy, Vivekananda College, Madras.

Sri N. S. Karanth is from Dharwar.

Swami Budhananda was formerly Editor, *Vedanta Kesari* and is now in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Srimati Saraswati Gaurishankar is from Calcutta.

Sri R. S. N. Ramakrishnan is from Ravanasamudram, Tinnevelly.

STUDY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Of late religious institutions are often in the news. With the appointment of the Commission for Hindu Religious Endowments the attention is naturally more drawn to the temples and maths. It is a good sign that the managements of such institutions have become more active. How far it is to keep the hold over spending of the surplus money and the fear that it will be taken away by the Government, or the desire to get a share from the central reserve if any, that is at the root need not be much probed into. Those willing to see our temples and other religious institutions active enough to do their duty by the people will welcome the energy and enthusiasm seen in different parts of India. Recently it was reported in the papers that programmes of large scale repairs of temples at Madura and

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Bhadrachalam and the reorganization of Sattras in Assam have been discussed or work begun. While repairs and improvement are the minimum that should be done, we are glad to note that efforts are being made to spread devotion and also information regarding the eternal values of religion. The problem of religion is that people suffer from apathy and inertia or lack of knowledge of the spiritual heritage. The immediate duty of all religious institutions is to stem the tide of irreligion and secularistic tendencies. If the temple is able to do this by creating a devotional atmosphere and disseminating the required information it will fulfil the expectations. In spreading of the knowledge, various methods are adopted, both traditional as well as modern. We are glad to learn that the Palani Temple Devasthanam has started the Palaniandavar College of Oriental Culture. It is not a traditional scriptural school but such studies have been integrated with modern subjects.

> The college is affiliated to the Madras University and offers a three-year course in oriental culture leading to the B.A. degree. While the subjects offered under parts I, II and IV are the same as those in other colleges, the subjects under part III are 'unique'. Under group A (main), the following will be taught: Oriental culture and outlines of Indian philosophy including Vedas, Upanishads and the six systems of Indian philosophy; principles of Saivism and Vaishnavism including Agamas; history of Indian culture; fine arts including temple architecture, painting, sculpture and iconography.
>
> Any two of the following subjects are to be taken under group B (ancillary); South Indian History upto 1565 A.D.; ethics; logic; epigraphy; iconography and comparative religion. Provision for 12 students has been made. All the students are given free instruction and also free boarding and lodging in the hostel. (*Hindu*, July 26, 1960.)

The Minister for Religious Endowments while inaugurating the College observed that the College he was inaugurating was a unique one in the whole of India in that provision for studying the several aspects of Hindu religion was made therein. It was wrong to think that a secular State meant a State without religion. On the other hand it only meant there would be equal protection to all the religions.

It has also been reported that a similar college will be opened at Tirupati where already extension lectures were being delivered in Summer for the employees of the Devasthanam. We whole-heartedly support the idea of integrating studies of culture with other modern subjects. The graduates of these colleges can very well be employed in works connected with temple administrations, archaeological departments, etc. Because of general cultural studies they will be useful in other fields too. But somehow or other the idea is being current in India that science and commerce graduates are preferable to graduates in humanities. It seems even in general jobs completely unconnected with precise subjects the students study, those of humanities are at a discount. This, if true, is surely based on some misconceptions. Those at the helm of affairs should try to remove this erroneous idea from the mind of the employers. The purpose of cultural and humanistic studies is to make the mind of the student susceptible to cultural moorings, and create a taste for the aesthetics as well as an awareness to higher values. These are rare things, very useful for life and can be acquired only through acquaintance with the cultural heritage. On the other hand the particular techniques of work are generally taught only after the employment or in the training period — at least in the majority of jobs. Then why this discrepancy? If this wrong notion is not removed, we are afraid, such study of cultural subjects will not be very popular. And if such efforts fail, the only alternative will be to leave intensive study to the specialists and introduce general papers on Indian culture based only on rudiments, for such study is very essential for beautifying life as well as for proper fulfilment of it.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

GOD REALISATION THROUGH REASON *

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

There have been people in every country who have protested against the doctrinaire approach to the problems of philosophy and religion. Religion in the West has always been based on dogma (in the proper sense of that word). Theology is the attempt to justify religious dogma at the bar of reason. Philosophy, however, has used the instrument of Reason to probe into the 'mysteries' of life. Among the Hindus, on the other hand, the prime source of authority for philosophical truths and religious tenets alike has been the Sruti. Reason has been used only as the handmaid of Sruti. Reason which is perfectly at home in the sensible world is unavailing in the supra-sensible sphere in which one must take on trust the declarations of those who have 'seen' with another sight. That is why the 'orthodox' Hindu philosopher calls himself as *Srutyaika-saranah* and says that his purpose is not to create a new philosophy, but to expound the '*Aupanishadam Sastram*'.

But, Indian philosophers were not merely doctrinaire expositors. But they made earnest attempts to provide rational justifications to the declarations of Sruti. Nay, more; they also affirmed the possibility of grasping the verities of Sruti by methods of reason. The classical attempt in this process is found in the *Mandukya Karika* of Gaudapada to which Sri Samkara has written commentary. The genesis of the Karika is stated by some persons—wrongly—to be the purpose to vindicate Vedanta by the appeal to Reason before the Buddhists who did not acknowledge Sruti as the source of philosophical knowledge.

The book under review is on similar lines and also goes a step further. The learned author is not content merely with showing that philosophical truths can be understood by Reason, but also insists that that instrument can, by itself, help to 'realise' those truths. Reason not only provides *Brahmajnana*, but can also produce *Brahmanubhava*. The author is extremely critical of 'confirmed believers and champions of mysticism who, in the name of *jnanayoga* have reduced philosophy to the art of seeing visions, hearing voices and getting realisation by repetition of formulas and the suppression of mental functioning in 'Samadhi'. '*Jnanayoga*', says the author, 'is the faith of straightforward thinking, the shortest way to the realisation of ultimate Reality.' By thinking or reasoning, he understands 'the process by which that which is implicit in experience is made explicit in terms of thought. He is, however, careful to point out that the '*tarka*' or reasoning that he speaks of is not dry logic or *sushka tarka*, but reasoning based on experience (*anubhavangatvena tarkah*).

Adopting this line of approach, the Swami takes the reader through the Karika line of reasoning and invites him to think about and 'understand the implications of the non-dual experience of deep sleep'. He contends that there is nothing more in the experience of *Samadhi* than in that of *Sushupti*, granting that we associate the word 'experience' with the state of *sushupti*. He argues that 'deep sleep is an experience of *moksha* itself' and 'that reasoning on this experience in the waking state leads to direct realization of moksha and *sarvatmabhava*'. Speaking of *nirvikalpa* experience, he says 'it has to be churned by the rod of reason before it can yield the truth that remains implicit in it.' The Swami affirms that *advaita samadhi* cannot be distinguished from *sushupti*; for, 'in neither of these is there particularised or Visesha Vijnana'. They are both states of *nirvisayajnana* and cannot be distinguished from each other. There is *vrttinasa* both in *Sushupti* and in *Samadhi* which render them identical for purposes of realisation, the difference between the two having reference to the method of bringing it about. According to the author, *vrittinirodha* of *samadhi* and *vrttivismarana* of *sushupti* have the same content.

In the same strain again the author argues that the state of *turiya* has no status of its own and he sees in the conception of this state and of *turiyatita* the fallacy of an infinite regress. He says: 'The concept of *turiya* is philosophically considered superfluous and the concept of *prajna* or *Isvara* is a theological supposition

* By Swami Iswarananda. (Sri Ramakrishna Asrama, Vilangan, Puranattukara P.O., Trichur, Kerala.) II Edn. Revised 1959. Pp. 110. Price Rs. 2.

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which is not verified in experience.' He goes on: 'If *turiya* is the position attained by the jnanin free from non-perception (*agrahana*) and wrong perception (*anyathagrahana*) of the Reality, then it falls within the waking state. If *turiya* is the witness of that state, that witness is no other than the witness in deep sleep'.

The sum and substance of the author's thesis in this book, to put it in his words, is that 'the philosophy of deep sleep is the key to the realisation of Brahman'. Quoting *Samprasadaiva Brahmavidya*, he calls out 'Arise, awake and know the serene of self of dreamless sleep'.

The essence of Advaita philosophy is its repudiation of the duality of subject and object, its condemnation of the objective world as mere appearance and its insistence on the true nature of the Self as an objectless *Cit* which is pure luminosity and the teaching that the content of *ananda* is the realisation of such a self. A parallel to the 'experience' of this objectless self is to be found in the state of *sushupti* in which the *Sakshi caitanya* abides in a latent condition and issues out as the *taijasa* of *svapna* or the *Visva* of the *jagrat* states.

Admitting this, it is yet difficult to agree with the author when he says that self-realisation is to be equated with the understanding of the philosophy of *sushupti* and when he denies the fact of *turiya* as a state of consciousness. (In fact, it is the super-consciousness.) A state like *sushupti* which only *illustrates* the condition of an abiding objectless subject cannot itself be the final state of realisation. The author quotes Sri Samkara: '*tasmad samprasadasthanam moksha drshtantabhutam*'. It is moksha *drshtanta* and not moksha *svarupa*. One wonders if, when he taught '*tattvamasi Svetaketo*', Svetaketu's father would have wanted his son to understand his instruction to mean, as the author avers, 'Svetaketo, thou art that which thou art in deep sleep'.

The state of *sushupti* is not a state of Self-realisation. It is true that shorn of the *upadhis* which supervene on it in *Jagrat* and *Svapna*, the caitanya remains by itself ready to function as the link between the states making for the identity of the empirical self. But the point is that there appears to be no *realisation* of this cit in the *sushupti* condition. For, realisation is by a consciousness which, in contrast from the empirical consciousness is transcendental for which there can be no empirical analogy. In *sushupti* there is no consciousness either of the empirical or of the transcendental kind. For, the man is aware of nothing during sleep nor is he aware, on waking, of what he felt like in deep sleep. Says he: '*Sukhamasvapsam na kincidavaidisham*'. It is hard to see how the *ajnana* of sushupti can be equated to *Brahmajnana*.

The state of *turiya* postulated as the *cit* in sushupti is not so immaculately pure as the Self to be realised should be. In *sushupti*, the *upadhis* are in the germ as it were ready to present to the mind the manifold of the 'dream world' in *svapna* or the 'waking world' in *jagrat*. A state in which there is no trace of this latent *avidya* where the pure *cit* abides in its lone splendour will alone conduce to true *Brahmajnana*. That this must be so is not only warranted by the logic of the three states, but it is also certified by the experience of those who have realised their Self. The authentic experience of samadhi which saints had cannot be cheaply dismissed as the art of seeing visions.

The author has a preference for the *samprasada* of *sushupti* as against the *samadhi* of the *turiya* state. It is true that when a man sleeps without dreams, he is said to have 'gone into his Self', *svam apiti, svapiti*, but this is a *lapse* or *sliding* and not a *realisation*. The author has a dislike for *dhyana* as a *sadhana* firstly because *dhyana* is intended to lead to *samadhi* which the author would not equate with realisation, and secondly because *dhyana* and *karma* are opposed to each other while *karma* is compatible with jnana based on reasoning. But there are two aspects of jnana, one as a *sadhana* and the other as the *sadhya*. Jnana in the latter aspect can co-exist with karma as in the case of the jivanmukta who is a *sthitaprajna*. But it is hard to see how jnana as a sadhana can be compatible with karma in any form. Even in the method of *Vicara*, dhyana is not to be ruled out as one is instructed to *meditate* on the Atman to realise it. The *dhira* to whom the Upanishads refer frequently is the man of unperturbed meditation who habituated himself to concentrated meditation.

The second part of this book quotes chapter and verse from several Upanisads and from Samkara Bhashyas in support of the author's thesis that the philosophy of deep sleep provides the substance of moksha. Reading these extracts, one gets the feeling that the author is reading his own views too much into those texts.

It is true that Vedanta is known as *Brahma mimamsa*. It is Brahmavicara arising from *Brahmajijnasa*. But Brahmavicara or rationali-

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sation, necessary as it is, cannot by itself lead to Brahmavidya and make one a Brahmavit. In the make up of a Brahmavit (who for that reason is Brahman—*Brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*), there is in addition to the conviction that reasoning provides the certificate of anubhava resulting from dhyana which bringing about *sakshatkara*, transformed a reasoned verity into a verified experience.

The book is thought-provoking and serves to spotlight many fundamental features of Advaita Vedanta. It bears ample evidence of the author's wide study of the source books and of his deep reflection on them. He presents his thesis with remarkable lucidity.

VIVEKACUDAMANI: with Commentary. Published by the Sringeri Mutt, Mysore. Pages 277.

The tenets of the crest jewel of absolute knowledge as expounded by Sri Sankaracharya needs no formal introduction to the philosophically inclined people who would have found clarity, explanation and exact purport of the prasthana traya in this book under review, a veritable treasure-house of nondual bliss. When we find a lucid commentary to such a great work, it teaches merely that what is simple is not truly simple and that absolute knowledge is something beyond our perception, senses and material value. The printing and get up is appropriate.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

TOWARDS LIGHT: By Swami Yogeswarananda. Second Edition. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ulsoor, Bangalore. Pp. 212. Price Rs. 1-8-0.

This reproduces five addresses on moral and religious topics delivered by the author in Bangalore and other places. They afford extremely valuable help for all spiritual aspirants, and the wide range of the author's scholarship and ability to express himself, make the book partake of the nature more or less of a text book on spiritualism. The author emphasises the need for 'true thoughts, words and deeds', and to choose 'the path of righteousness, with your ears open to the words of the masters, eyes fascinated by the good, and hearts panting for the blessings of a perfect life' (p. 88). 'Grow, he says, holy in action, speech and thought and fix your mind upon God: and when like a lake in the depth of a calm and cool moonlight, when its surface sleeps in the bright light of the moon and not a ripple stirs its waters, you contemplate on God, your heart will rest in peace in His ineffable light' (p. 211).

A truly remarkable publication, well worth deep study and pondering over.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

1. THE DISCIPLE'S LAMP: By Swami Yogeswarananda. Pp. 108 + IV. Price 0-7-0.

2. THE FUTURE LIFE: By Swami Yogeswarananda, Pp. 107. Price 0-7-0. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ulsoor, Bangalore.

These little books treat of great subjects. The first enjoins unstinted devotion to the spiritual preceptor, who is a 'world mover' and whose influence 'extends to generations yet unborn.' The second is exceedingly instructive and throws open the vista of what all constitutes the future life. Death is but a 'change of conditions'; and 'as in the physical world, none of the spiritual efforts of a man are ever lost' (p. 23). The fate of every man in the future will not be other than just. If he has chosen a life of righteousness, he will attain a higher and happier life (p. 41). If he has sincerity and earnestness, his life will be one of progress. God will brighten it with the light of His Grace (p. 107).

S. RAJAGOPALAN

PERIODICAL

VEDANTA (French) No. 16-17, 1960. Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna, Bd. Victor-Hugo, Gretz (S & M) France.

In this beautifully got-up special issue of the *Vedanta* Journal, we have a delightful account by some of the well-known disciples of Sri Ramakrishna of their reminiscences of the Saint. Swami Shivananda, Akhandananda, Vijnananda, Premananda etc. narrate their own and their co-disciples' experiences of the Master's Grace, Love, solicitude and, what is most instructive, his methods of reaching his spiritual help to the devotees and directing their sadhana. These narrations are preceded by an engaging discourse of Swami Siddheshwarananda on the nature of the total realisation attained by the Master. As he points out, Sri Ramakrishna not only communed with Brahman in *samadhi*, but saw also the same Brahman around with his eyes open. Again, the realisation was not the result of any process of sadhana but was of the nature of a Divine Revelation which was followed by practices of sadhana. Swamiji shows in the course of his dissertation that individual effort can only cover the realm of Prakriti and if anything beyond this Prakriti is to be

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attained it can only be by the manifestation of what transcends it, the Supreme Grace.

The book is lavishly illustrated and artistically produced.

M. P. PANDIT.

THE DIVINE CALL: Vol. 1, No. 2. Edited and Published by S. P. Nayar, Guruvayoor, Kerala. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.

The above journal along with several others has been inspired by Swami Chinmayanandaji, who has been preaching and inspiring the masses all over, by his eloquence of thought and utterings. The number has interesting articles of spiritual interest while maintaining a good standard.

MIRA: Vol. 18, No. 6. Edited by Gangaram Sajandas, Mira's High School, 10, Connaught Road, Poona-1. Annual Subscription Rs. 5.

This April number bears very interesting articles written by renowned men on The Paramahamsa, Mahavira and Maharshi Ramana. The journal owes its existence to the inspiration of the well-known Sadhu Vaswaniji, formerly of Sindh.

THE MYSTIC, Volume 1, No. 1. April '60. Edited by Manjulal S. Desai. Published by S. C. Vin, 402 Cadell Road, Bombay-28, Pages 60. Price 50 nP.

The above monthly is one more addition towards propagating the hidden knowledge of Indian Culture, and knowledge of Yoga. There are interesting articles in this issue and they breathe in a sense of novelty. The general editing promises a bright future for the monthly issue.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, SINGAPORE

At the invitation of some friends and devotees, Swami Siddhatmananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore, recently visited Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, South Vietnam and Indonesia. He delivered twenty-five lectures under the auspices of various institutions and organisations, including Rotary Club, Theosophical Society, Divine Life Society, Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge, Faculty of Arts (University of Cambodia), Vietnamese Association for Asian Cultural Relations, Indian Association and Chinese Buddhist Association. Besides various places of cultural importance, he visited the famous temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borobadur and Prambanan in Java and the temples in Bali.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

SRI KRISHNA JAYANTI

The birthday of Sri Krishna was observed on Sunday, 14th August in the Math at 5-30 p.m. Sri Suka Brahma Ramaswami Sastrigal spoke on Sri Krishnavatara in Tamil. He dwelt at length on the purpose of an incarnation in general and that of Sri Krishna in particular and the uniqueness of His *lila* in the mundane world and the circumstances that relate to the birth of that Great Saviour of mankind and the lodestar of the Gopi's hearts, quoting very freely from the Bhagavatam and other sacred scriptures.

After arati in the shrine, Prof. K. Panchapagesan spoke on Sri Krishna in English. He stressed on the role of avatara as also the different types of devotees. The famous Gita sloka has one extra letter of *ca* after *arta, jijnasu* and *jnani*. This *ca*, said the speaker, was interpreted by the great Advaitin, Madhusudana Saraswati as referring to the transcendental love of the Gopis. Another interesting point he made out was about the ten incarnations. The first avataras,—fish, tortoise, boar were all in the nether worlds because Kali or Sin was there in Satya-yuga. In Treta it became a little prominent and Rama fought the Rakshasa Ravana. In Dwapara the Kali became still prominent and Sri Krishna had to incarnate Himself. In the Kali age this will be in the man himself necessitating further incarnation of God.

From 8-30 p.m. to 12-30 a.m. there was bhajana and elaborate puja of Lord Sri Krishna along with homa.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII | OCTOBER 1960 | No. 6

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna was sitting on the small couch. His room at Dakshineswar was filled with devotees, when M. entered. The conversation was about worldly men who look down on those who aspire for spiritual things.

Sri Ramakrishna to Narendra: How do you feel about it? Worldly people say all kind of things about the spiritual-minded. But look here! When an elephant moves along the street, curs and other small animals bark and cry after it; but the elephant doesn't even look back at them. If people speak ill of you, what will you think of them?'

Narendra: 'I shall think that dogs are barking at me.'

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling): 'Oh no! You mustn't go that far, my child! (Laughter.) God dwells in all beings. But you may be intimate only with good people; you must keep away from the evil-minded. God is even in the tiger; but you cannot embrace the tiger on that account. (Laughter.) You may say, "Why run away from a tiger, which is also a manifestation of God?" The answer is: "Those who tell you to run away, are also manifestations of God — and why shouldn't you listen to them?" You must hiss at wicked people. You must frighten them, lest they should do you harm. But one must never injure others.'

'Worldly people will never listen to you, if you ask them to renounce everything and devote themselves whole-heartedly to God. Therefore Chaitanya and Nitai made an arrangement to attract them. They would say to such a person, "Come, repeat the Name of Hari, and you shall have a delicious soup of magur fish and the embrace of a young woman." Many people, attracted by the fish and the young woman, would chant the Name of God. After tasting a little of the Nectar of God's hallowed Name, they would soon realize that the "fish-soup" really meant the tears they shed for love of God, while the "young woman" signified the earth. The embrace of the woman meant rolling on the ground in the rapture of Divine Love.'

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THE IDEA OF TAPAS IN THE GITA

The idea of tapas is a cardinal one in the ancient scriptures of India. Before creation, it is said, the Creator Himself performed tapas and brought forth the world. Tapas thus stands for expansion, growth, multiplication. Right from the Rigveda Samhita the idea of tapas is found in various contexts. Tapas literally means heat. But it has acquired different shades of meaning in different ages. So it is variously translated as heat, contemplation, concentration, penance, austerity, suffering of pain, repentance, self-mortification and the like. In the Gita tapas naturally gets an important place. It has been described as a sattvic quality (16-1) and also as yajna (4-28). Sri Krishna says that He Himself is the tapas of the ascetics. (7. 9.) Yajna, dana and tapas are the three main ideas of every spiritual discipline and the Gita takes due note of them when it says:

> The work of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished, but it should indeed be performed; (for) sacrifice, gift and austerity are purifying to the wise. (18. 5.)

Whatever helps a man to progress towards realization is tapas. It is specially the effort, physical and mental, to bring the mind under control. Thus study, meditation, etc. also come under this heading. The Gita defines three types of tapas in the following words:

> The worship of the Devas, the twice-born, the Gurus, and the wise; purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-injury are called the austerity of the body.
>
> Speech which causes no vexation, and is true, as also agreeable and beneficial, and regular study of the Vedas — these are said to form the austerity of speech.
>
> Serenity of mind, kindliness, silence, self-control, honesty of motive — this is called the mental austerity. (17. 14, 15, 16.)

Here the idea of strenuous efforts and suffering of pain for mental purification is stressed. The idea of purification is important. The Gita idea of tapas is not mere austerity for austerity's sake but it is enjoined as a means of purifying the mind, which is the goal of all sadhana. The crucifixion of the flesh is a much discussed idea in the Christian literature. But the Gita does not recognize this as very valuable unless it leads to the desired goal of mental purification. It is because of this idea that the Gita speaks of the barbarous type of tapas.

> Those men who practise severe austerities not enjoined by the Shastras, given to ostentation and egoism, possessed with the power of lust and attachment, torture, senseless as they are, all the organs in the body, and Me dwelling in the body within; know them to be of Asurika resolve. (17. 5, 6.)
>
> That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture or for the purpose of ruining another, is declared to be Tamasika. (17. 19.)

The ideal is to perform these actions without any desire of fruit.

> Even these works, O Partha, should be performed leaving attachment and the fruits; such is My best and certain conviction. (18. 6.)

Tapas to be spiritually fruitful must be sattvic. It must be spontaneous and motivated by the highest objective. Self-torture has no place in real spiritual life. Sri Krishna quite definitely speaks against all types of extreme practices in

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various contexts. For this He is said to be the prophet of balanced, spontaneous discipline. Of course, human nature is such that it often goes to excesses. Hence we find that this idea of tapas often degenerated into mere physical suffering. But even in that we may find a beauty when we see that these tapasvins endured great physical hardship for the sake of God or even for lesser ideals. Men of realization, however, lead a simple, spontaneous life. Fully resigned to God they may even be seen to perform great austerities. But they have no plan of their own. Moreover, as they are singularly free from the body idea, these austerities do not affect them.

Tapas is, in a sense, the most important discipline enjoined. Yajna and dana, sacrifice and charity are dependent on external factors other than oneself. It is tapas alone that fully pertains to the individual himself, both physically and mentally, culminating in mental growth. And spiritual growth is nothing but inner growth. Of course, thereby the other two are not minimized. They too require a great mental effort and growth for accomplishment. And in the end they too turn more mental and become identified with tapas. Tapas to be fully fruitful must be properly motivated. It is the spirit in which we undertake a discipline that counts more in spiritual life.

For the jnanins tapas is knowledge. So it has also been described as *jnanamaya* 'being of the nature of knowledge'. It is more internal than external. It is the growth of the mind making it more reflective, concentrated, purified. The self-concentration and self-mastery thus gained is for individual and social benefit.

Tapas is divine in origin. It has been referred to as Karma with God as its object. As Sri Krishna says:

> Knowing Me as the dispenser of Yajnas and asceticisms, as the Great Lord of all worlds, as the friend of all beings he attains Peace. (5. 29.)

The Gita stresses on the ideal of spiritual life which is Self-realization, union with the Godhead and not on mere self-control which is only a negation of the lower self.

> The Yogi is regarded as superior to those who practise asceticism, also to those who have obtained wisdom (through the Shastras). He is also superior to the performers of action, (enjoined in the Vedas). Therefore, be thou a Yogi, O Arjuna! (6. 46.)

It is because of this that a yogi, who is united with Brahman, has a higher place.

> Whatever meritorious effect is declared (in the Scriptures) to accrue from (the study of the Vedas), (the performance of) Yajnas, (the practice of) austerities and gifts — above all this rises the Yogi, having known this, and attains to the primeval, supreme Abode. (8. 28.)

According to Sri Krishna the highest knowledge consists in knowing God as the root. Devotion can lead an aspirant to that realization.

> Neither by the study of the Veda and Yajna, nor by gifts, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, am I in such Form seen, in the world of men, by any other than thee, O great hero of the Kurus.

> Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as thou hast seen Me. (11. 48, 53.)

The practice of tapas much depends upon the conditions of life. It is the natural duty of an evolved soul.

> The control of the mind and the senses, austerity, purity, forbearance, and also uprightness, knowledge, realization, belief in a hereafter — these are the duties of the Brahmanas, born of (their own) nature. (18. 42.)

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The Vanaprasthas, because of their austere life, have specially been known as the tapasvins throughout the times.

How various are the forms of tapas can be seen from the Gita. In the seventeenth chapter human nature has first been divided into divine and demoniac. Then there is tapas of body, mind and speech and each again according to sattva, rajas and tamas. Even sattvic tapas must be directed towards God-realization only. The tapas of body, mind and speech has already been referred to. The tapas, inspired by sattva, rajas and tamas, has been described thus :

> This threefold austerity practised by steadfast men, with great Shraddha, desiring no fruit, is said to be Sattvika.
>
> That austerity which is practised with the object of gaining welcome, honour, and worship, and with ostentation, is here said to be Rajasika, unstable, and transitory.
>
> That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture or for the purpose of ruining another, is declared to be Tamasika. (17. 17, 18, 19.)

The tamasika and rajasika tapas are performed because of mistaken notions of right and wrong, the sense of values being wrong. The desire for fruit is preponderant there.

> That which has a distorted apprehension of Dharma and its opposite and also of right action and its opposite, that intellect, O Partha, is Rajasika. (18. 31.)

Moreover their objective is often very low.

> Sattvika men worship the Devas ; Rajasika, the Yakshas and the Rakshasas ; the others — the Tamasika men — the Pretas and the hosts of Bhutas. (17. 4.)

The scriptures enjoin giving up of all actions as they are mixed with evil. But it prohibits giving up the action of yajna, dana and tapas.

> Some philosophers declare that all actions should be relinquished as an evil, whilst others (say) that the work of Yajna, gift, and austerity should not be relinquished.
>
> The work of Yajna, gift, and austerity should not be relinquished, but it should indeed be performed ; (for) sacrifice, gift, and austerity are purifying to the wise. (18. 3, 5.)

When so subtle is the distinction between different types of them there is every chance of mistakes in the performance of tapas, etc. So the Gita prescribes that the name of Brahman should be repeated before the commencement.

> Therefore, uttering 'Om', are the acts of sacrifice, gift, and austerity as enjoined in the ordinances, always begun by the followers of the Vedas. (17. 24.)
>
> Uttering 'Tat', without aiming at fruits, are the various acts of sacrifice, austerity, and gift performed by the seekers of Liberation. (17. 25.)

Tapas has been described as Sat and Asat.

> Steadiness in Yajna, austerity, and gift is also called 'Sat' : as also action in connection with these (or, action for the sake of the Lord) is called 'Sat'.
>
> Whatever is sacrificed, given, or performed and whatever austerity is practised without Shraddha, it is called Asat, O Partha ; it is naught here or hereafter. (17. 27, 28.)

Tapas etc., can be purified as told earlier by repeating the name of Brahman.

Sri Krishna, however, has asked the devotees to perform all actions as an offering to God. Then they will accrue no evil effect and produce the best results.

> Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me. (9. 27.)

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The importance of tapas can be well appreciated when we see that Sri Krishna prohibits the holy teachings of the Gita being imparted to one who does not practise tapas.

> This is never to be spoken by thee to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not render service, nor to one who cavils at Me. (18. 67.)

Tapas is thus a very important item in spiritual discipline. It is to practise penance and austerity to bring the body and mind under control and to purify them, thus bringing in concentration directed to the Self which is the goal of all sadhana. The ideal of tapas has inspired scores of men down the ages to sacrifice their self-interest, nay even their minimum comforts, so that they might realize it. Men of tapas have naturally a tremendous influence on the society. It is sure that it will retain its hold on man in future too in spite of the progress of modern materialistic view of life which apparently is so much against this noble idea.

SRI KRISHNA— RAMAKRISHNA MUTUALITY

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

I

A graceful necklace of blue glass-beads, I saw the other day, hanging round the tender neck of a young calf, sprightly and healthy. The Mother-cow was once in a while looking at the calf, perhaps quite proud of the beauty of her darling. The milkman was following them with the basket of oilcake poised under his left arm, two long milk cans hanging on his two fingers and the inevitable rope suspended from his shoulder even as the familiar snake that bedecks the blue throat of great God Siva. This is of course a familiar picture which every one of us sees everyday on the streets and lanes of the city of Madras—milkman going about milking from door to door under the watchful eyes of the mothers of homes.

But what struck me that day was this garland of blue glass-beads around the tender neck of the young calf. Perhaps it was not so much the garland which struck me, but it was the psychology of the milkman which prompted him to bedeck the young calf that way. This touch of affection which the milkman brought into play in his relationship with the calf of the mother-cow by selling whose milk he lives on is not a necessity arising out of professional requirements. Many a milkman —almost everyone of them—just put a most prosaic sort of a rope around the tender neck of the calf and go about pitilessly dragging them along the streets for extracting milk out of the mother-cow. Some do even that atrocious swindling over the cows by presenting to them the straw-calves, which to all intents is the worst psychological exploitation men could inflict on a dumb creature.

However, if man has a psychology, it is imaginable that the cow too has a psychology. Therefore it was possible that the mother-cow whose calf was so affectionately bedecked with the glass beads must have been immensely pleased with the milkman for his this gracious act. If I were the mother-cow, I should have certainly given him an extra quantity of milk, not for feeding me well, but for loving me well, by way of enhancing the beauty of my darling in that affectionate fashion.

This is mutuality—*Paraspara-bhāva.*

This young calf with garland around its neck conjured up before my mind's eye series of pictures which connected the dust of this dreary earth with the heavens of our dream. This planet on which we live and love, do wise and foolish things, wage wars and suffer

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defeats—this our dear earth is in its place because of a mutuality that exists between stars and planets. If this is an expanding universe, it can expand only on the basis of the principle of mutuality. The sun holds this earth, and the earth holds this moon. That is not to say that there were no heavenly out-laws as we cannot say there are no out-laws in this world.

But by and large one sees wherever there blossoms a flower, ripens a fruit, smiles a baby, arises prosperity, reigns harmony, prevails peace—there the law of mutuality has had its sway. You bend upon a plant and pour water, the plant smiles and presents you flowers. You manure the root of the tree, it gives you luscious fruits. The wife works hard in the kitchen with smoke blinding her eyes, her soft hands get burnt often, perhaps the head gets struck against door-frame, even then she enjoys her labour—the husband perspires through the whole gruelling day in the office, he comes home and is soothed by the understanding that he receives there. And they have a baby—the fruit of their understanding. The baby grows. The kid becomes the kicking young man. The mother becomes the grand-mother, father grand-father. The grand-father retires, the father takes up the responsibilities. Thus functions the law of mutuality.

In this way the principle of mutuality expands its circle of ripples over the affairs of men until it covers the whole world. When there is mutuality between families in a village, between social groups, there is prosperity and harmony in the country. When there is mutuality between nations and nations, there is peace in the world.

And when this principle of mutuality does not prevail, there is conflict and crisis, chaos and confusion everywhere. In such situations flowers do not blossom in flowery manner, fruits do not ripen fruitfully, the wife does not enjoy her work in the kitchen, the husband develops objectionable association, the child becomes a delinquent, the student breaks open the head of the teacher, the teacher becomes a trade-unionist, there is communal cutting of throats, linguistic pillage of state-properties, shooting down in the streets, losing of tempers in the Parliament, grinning and calling names in UNO ultimately culminating in the insanity of armament race.

Be it understood clearly here that the principle of mutuality is not just a barter of conveniences or a social contract of self-seeking. What makes the teacher respectable is not what he does for the student just for the money he gets, but that element which enkindles his work with a glow of love and sacrifice. What makes the wife lovable to the husband is not the throwing cash desires down at the counter of husband's desires, but that element again which chastens selfishness in the fire of self-sacrifice. The milkman could very well get milk out of the cow even if he did not present a necklace to the calf. But that he did, brings about a happy mutuality between him and the cow. When the workers in a factory are treated with respect and consideration and not with contempt as mere wage-earners, when the employer is looked upon as a well-wisher and not an exploiter, a happy human understanding grows between them. If there is a fire in such a factory at midnight, the workers will rush without needing to be called by any one to extinguish the fire. This is mutuality—*Paras-para-bhāva,* which is at the root of all genuine welfare conducive to higher evolution of man.

In those days when gods seemed to be so near about human affairs and so responsive to human calls, the Rishis of the Rigveda addressed many a hymn illustrative of this principle of mutuality.

Indra is described in one hymn :

य: सुन्वन्तमवति य: पचन्तं
य: शंसन्तं य: शशमानमूती ।
यस्य ब्रह्म वर्धनं यस्य सोमो
यस्येदं राध: स जनास इन्द्र: ॥

'Who with his aid helps him, that presses Soma, him that bakes, him that offers praise, him that has prepared the sacrifice; whom prayer, whom soma, whom this gift strengthens; he, O men, is Indra'.

(*Rigveda Samhita,* Mandala 2, Sukta 12, Rik 14)

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Rudra is hymned as follows :

कुमारश्चित्पितरं वन्दमानं
प्रति नानाम रुद्रोपयन्तम् ।
भूरेर्दातारं सत्पतिं गृणीषे
स्तुतस्त्वं भेषजा रास्यस्मे ॥

A son bows towards his father who approving approaches him, O Rudra, I sing to the true Lord, the giver of much ; praised thou givest remedies to us. (2, 33, 12)

Mitra returns the courtesy :

मित्रो देवेष्वायुषु
जनाय वृक्तबर्हिषे ।
इष इष्टव्रता अकः ॥

Mitra, among gods and mortals, has provided food according to the ordinances he desires, for the man whose sacrificial grass is spread. (3, 59, 9)

Such citations can be multiplied. Coming to the Upanishads, we find this principle of mutuality in a more digested form as it were : There are hymns like the following :

आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक् प्राणश्चक्षुः । श्रोत्रमथो-बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि । सर्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदम् । माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां । मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोत् । अनिराकरण-मस्तु । अनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु । तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ।
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

May my limbs grow vigorous, my speech, breath, eye, ear also my strength and all my senses ! All is the Brahman of the Upanishads. May I never discard Brahman ! May not Brahman discard me ! May there be no discarding ! May there be no discarding of me ! Therefore, let those virtues taught in the Upanishads be in me dedicated to Atman, let them be in me ! Om peace, peace, peace.

In the Gita, the Lord defines the principle in a clear manner :

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥
सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥
देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥
(III. 9-11)

The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of yajna ; do thou therefore, O Son of Kunti, perform action for Yajna alone, devoid of attachment.

The Prajapati, having in the beginning, created mankind together with yajna, said, 'By this shall ye multiply ; this shall be the milch cow of your desires'.

Cherish the Devas with this, and may those Devas cherish you : thus cherishing one another, ye shall gain the highest good.

Now if the truth is that mutuality in human plane results in all-round welfare and mutuality between men and gods leads to *Param sreyah*, highest good, it follows logically that mutuality between two incarnations could bring about only a still more superior kind of spiritual good. Or in other words in the absence of such a mutuality between two incarnations, spiritual crisis, conflict and confusion would prevail everywhere.

II

If the Sanatana Dharma, the religion of the Hindus,—though ancient,—is today a mighty power in the world full of promise and potentialities for the welfare and redemption of humanity, it is not a little due to the profound Krishna-Ramakrishna mutuality.

The question will naturally arise : how could there be mutuality between the two separated by millenniums ? True, Avataras or incarnations do appear in this world at different points of time separated, sometimes, by centuries. But essentially they are timeless manifestations of the eternal principle though appearing in the world at a point of time. This is how Krishna-darshana is possible even today. And hence Krishna-Ramakrishna mutuality came to be but a natural process, a study of the growth and culmination of which will be found to be very fascinating, instructive and inspiring.

Sri Ramakrishna was born under the mystic brooding of the spirit of Vishnu Himself. Kshudiram, the saintly father of Sri Ramakrishna, had gone to Gaya (1835) to make obsequial offerings for the satisfaction of the souls of the departed ancestors. There he

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had a dream-vision of Gadadhara who graciously offered Himself to be born as his son. This was nothing very strange in the case of Ramakrishna. Such a phenomenon, we read in books, is associated also with the births of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Sankara and Chaitanya.

Now Gadadhar, as boy Sri Ramakrishna was called, grew in the same pastoral surroundings as obtained in Gokula, into a sturdy, naughty, attractive and mischievous boy. He became the darling of the village even as Krishna was. Specially the village women were so fond of him that they would rush to Chandramani's parlour on different pretexts in order to have a glimpse of Gadadhar, the inspirer of endless fun, joy and laughter. Even from his childhood Krishna-bhava was so pronounced in Ramakrishna that he was looked upon and worshipped as 'Bala-Gopala' or Boy-Krishna by Prasannamayi, Dharmadas Lala's sister. In later times, another woman devotee, Aghoramani, worshipped and realized Sri Ramakrishna as 'Bala-Gopala' and became well known as 'Gopala's mother'. Brahmani saw 'Bala-Gopala' in Sri Ramakrishna. The women of Sitanath's family also worshipped him as the embodiment of 'Gauranga' or Krishna, when he went into Bhava-samadhi, singing devotional songs. They got made a gold-flute and costly apparels for him. But the younger women of the village preferred to look upon him as their spiritual lover and friend. Decorated in woman's apparel he would enact the parts of Radha or Vrinda for them. Gadadhar often flew from school with friends and repaired to the Manikraja's mango grove in order to enact the roles of Rama and Krishna, and on occasions went into those peculiar moods which afterwards became so normal and natural with him—Bhava-samadhi. Even as a child, Gadadhar grew up with such a pronounced Krishna-propensity, that he inspired Krishna-thoughts in whatever he did and wherever he went. It appeared as though Krishna was pursuing young Gadadhar like the hound of the heaven—almost in a purposive manner.

Years rolled by. Now it was time for Sri Ramakrishna to turn round and pursue Krishna. The Tantrika-sadhana was over under the guidance of the Brahmani, the lady preceptor, who, as mentioned above, looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as Bala-Gopala. Now began the Vaishnava sadhana. Santa, dasya, sakhya bhavas or the attitudes of quietude, servant and friend—had already been practised. This time he plunged himself in the sadhana of Madhura-bhava—the attitude of the sweetheart—wearing women's dress for six months. It was a very tortuous sadhana—for Krishna is not attained easily. Through intense physical suffering resulting out of *mahabhava,* Sri Ramakrishna at last realized Sri Krishna through the grace of Sri Radhika, whom he had realized during the course of the sadhana. The Krishna-form got merged in his own form. Later on at Dakshineswar he saw a palpable vision in which he found the lotus feet of Krishna, Bhagavata and his heart united with a thread of celestial light. This merger of Krishna-form into Ramakrishna is a unique phenomenon and is a theme for profound meditation.

From now on Sri Ramakrishna became, as it were, Sri Krishna's alter-ego. When afterwards Sri Ramakrishna went to Vrindavan, he had several visions of Krishna. Gangamata (who used to be considered as Lalita, the friend of Radhika), a spiritually advanced devotee of Krishna at once recognized Sri Ramakrishna as Dulali or Radhika. Not strange at all—had not Radhika's form also got merged in the form Sri Ramakrishna? Therefore in Ramakrishna we had both Radhika and Krishna united in one. It was again not without reason that some people used to look upon the Master as Nava-Gauranga,—Gauranga appearing in new form.

When Sri Ramakrishna returned from Vrindavan, he brought with him dust of the place and spreading them in Dakshineswar said that the place had become as holy as Vrindavan. This only shows in what light Sri Ramakrishna viewed the Vrindavan-lila or the sport at Vrindavan of Sri Krishna. Dak-

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shineswar had become holiest of the holy places in the world by virtue of Sri Ramakrishna's own sadhana and realizations there, by virtue of the innumerable visions of God which he had had on that spot, by virtue of the celestial footprints of deities who had in love for Sri Ramakrishna sanctified the dust of Dakshineswar. Even then Sri Ramakrishna carried the dust of Vraja or Vrindavan and spreading them over Dakshineswar temple grounds deemed the place to have become as holy as Vrindavan. In this simple act of Sri Ramakrishna, which we may perhaps bypass as of little import, while reading his life, we are provided a precious clue by which we can near-understand some of the profundities of Krishna-Ramakrishna mutuality. Everyone of us have heard so much in criticism of the Vrindavan-lila of Sri Krishna. But when we see one like Sri Ramakrishna carrying the dust of Vraja to sanctify Dakshineswar, we get an insight into the heart of the meaning of the Vrindavan-lila. Be it understood that this is not only sanctifying Dakshineswar, but also reviving Vrindavan. This is not only getting out of Krishna, but also adding unto Krishna. This is adding Purna unto Purna. This is how a later Avatara fulfils and not destroys. This is how ancient spiritual truths are revived, revivified and made dynamic for the redemption of mankind.

The merger of Krishna-essence in Ramakrishna did not only mean Self-pouring of Satchidananda into Satchidananda for a colourful Self-effervescence, but it also meant revitalization of Krishna-form through the vital spiritual being of Sri Ramakrishna, the reinforced avatarahood required for the age. Aghoramani, later known as Gopala's mother, after thirty years of tapas realized her chosen ideal 'Gopal' in Sri Ramakrishna. She actually saw Gopal coming out of Sri Ramakrishna's body, importuning her for this and that and again vanishing in the body of Sri Ramakrishna. Rakhal, later Swami Brahmananda, came in Sri Ramakrishna's life with visions and emotions of Krishna-association, and Sri Ramakrishna would melt before him in Yasoda-bhava. The mad woman who frequented the Kasipur garden looked upon Sri Ramakrishna in Madhura-Bhava. Stalwart devotees like Sasi considered her a nuisance and resolved to brush her aside rather harshly. But the 'Bhava-grahi', Sri Ramakrishna said, 'No, no, let her come and go away,' for his was the Krishna-heart.

In this way we find the whole gamut of essential Krishna-association with the focal point of Krishna Himself got resurrected or revived as it were in the life process of the spiritual being of Sri Ramakrishna. While it is not easy for mortals to adequately delve into the ramifications of the mystic meaning of such a phenomenon, we can very well trace with benefit certain other implications which appear to flow from this.

III

In Krishna and Ramakrishna we have two of the most lovable world-teachers. No other avatar or prophet or world teacher came so very close to our lives. You could share joke or a fruit with Krishna. And equally with Ramakrishna. One day Sri Ramakrishna, after smoking, offered his *hooka,* smoking pipe to Narendranath, later known as Swami Vivekananda for a puff. It was but natural for Naren to shrink before this unconventional offer. But Sri Ramakrishna rebuked him saying that he was small-minded. Just imagine an avatara behaving like this! After the Viswarupa darshana, the vision of the cosmic form, Arjuna realized that Krishna deserved better regard than he had ever extended to him. But Krishna did not put up a long killjoy face for all that. Wherever Krishna and Ramakrishna went there were songs, dance, music, joy, humour and flow of emotion and inspiration. But perhaps with due regard one cannot say this regarding all the avataras or for the matter of that other world-teachers. You do not think of easily rushing to embrace Narasimha Avatara. You do not think of sharing a joke with Parasurama. Even Rama is a bit too dignified and aloof and lofty! Buddha, serene though, reminds you always

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that this world is all dukkha. Christ, wondrous Christ, is so uncompromising. Vigorous Mohammed of the deserts—are my garlands of wild flowers acceptable to him? Tao-tze is elusive. Confucius is subtle. None of these smile so whole-heartedly, throw their arms around you as cordially as did Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna.

Krishna and Ramakrishna come close to our hearts and hearths and they have a word and relation for everyone in the human family. Their divinity sits lightly on our burdened souls. We can bear with them. We are not afraid of them.

And with all that, the messages they gave to the world are the boldest, most catholic, comprehensive and revolutionary. Appearing at a time when Sri Krishna did, he gave a conceptual disciplinary to the whole national mind giving every one his spiritual locus, possibility and goal. Where there was doubt and dubiousness, he brought clarity and gave the unerring sense of direction; where there was inanity and futility, he revealed the parity of the promise of life. Where there was strife he brought harmony, where there was confusion, he brought about synthesis. Sri Krishna gave the whole of human life a brave, forward-looking, progressive meaning. He made the whole svarga-minded—heaven-minded—nation moksha-minded—liberation-minded.

It required the boldness and creativity of a Sri Krishna to say:

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥
(II. 45)

The Vedas deal with the three gunas. Be thou free, O Arjuna, from the trial of the gunas, free from the pairs of the opposites, ever-balanced, free from (the thought of) getting and keeping, and established in the Self.

It again required the insight and sagacity of Sri Krishna to say:

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।
ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥
(XVI. 24)

So let the Sastra be thy authority in ascertaining what ought not to be done; having known what is said in the ordinance of the Sastra, thou should act here.

Krishna had not to mince matters. He put across the truth squarely sometimes even fiercely. He called this world 'अनित्यमसुखं लोकं' 'दुःखालयम् अशाश्वतं' impermanent world, fraught with miseries, etc. Yet he gave the call:

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून् भुङ्क्ष्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ (XI. 33)

Therefore stand up and win glory; conquer your enemies and enjoy an opulent kingdom. By Me and none other have they already been slain; be an instrument only O Arjuna.

The battle of life had to be accepted any way. So let it be accepted in such a way that the very manner of acceptance of that battle might lead to the goal of life. Therefore the exhortation is युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः fight without feverishness. As to paths, all are God's paths; when earnestly followed, they will lead to God:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥
(IV. 11)

In whatsoever way men approach Me, even so do I reward them; for it is My path, O Partha, that men follow in all things.

Therefore quarrel in this regard is useless:

एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ।
(V. 5)

The state reached by men of renunciation is reached by men of action too.

And it is for the wise to keep this wisdom alive in the world by their very life; therefore they must labour hard:

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथाऽसक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥
(III. 25)

As the ignorant act, attached to their work, O Bharata, so should an enlightened man act, but without attachment, in order that he may set people on the right path.

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Go round the world, look into other scriptures, it will be difficult for you to find a bolder gospel acceptable to the generality of mankind in the modern age with all the conflicts and confusions.

The merger of Sri Krishna in Sri Ramakrishna also meant the merger of Sri Krishna's message in the realizations of Sri Ramakrishna, whence arose a fresh gospel with augmented power of redemptive capacity. If anyone had any doubt about the truths of the bold message of Sri Krishna, he could see them taken up one by one in the life led by Sri Ramakrishna and experimentally shown to be valid to any discerning observer. The *uttara-avatara,* or later incarnation, that Sri Ramakrishna was, it was but his duty to make dynamic the essential truths revealed by a *purva-avatara* or previous incarnation and then roll in this oceanic fusion to new horizons of spiritual discovery.

In his life Sri Ramakrishna not only established the reality of God, the be-all and end-all of all pursuits of life, but also showed by himself travelling and reaching the goal by each of them, that God can be reached through various paths. He thus not only showed the basic rationale of harmony among all the sects and creeds of Hinduism but also established the fact that all the major religions of the world were true and that practice of them could lead to God-realization. It is only by making God the only concern of all our affairs at home, in society, in the country that we can give a shape of sanity to the affairs of the world. But to that end the people having the knowledge of God must work for the good of the world and immolate themselves for the future of humanity. This is why he sent forth Vivekananda in the world. And you know what Vivekananda means.

The power of Sri Ramakrishna's message consists not only in the fact that every single word of his emanated from the magazine of his experience but also in the fact that Sri Krishna's message is completely digested in that experience.

And we are the inheritors of these wonderful and unique spiritual results of Sri Krishna-Ramakrishna mutuality. If we could readily, boldly and sufficiently work out the implications of this mutuality in our lives what could not happen in this world!

KRISHNA—THE BELOVED

BY A DEVOTEE

Come, Beloved, Come
Do not torment me, Come

Thy maids have all the virtues;
Beauty herself adorns them,
Youth, coursing through their veins
Gives them charm.
Their lovely forms, clad
In Thy love's Saris,
Move unabashed.
For they have made,
Of themselves, an offering unto Thee.
Blessed be their love for Thee
Twice Blessed Thy love for them.

Consumed by separation,
Helpless and friendless am I
No virtue do I possess,
Neither youth nor beauty;
I only know to serve and be
The dust of Thy lotus feet;
Life after life I have served Thee,
Unowned, I am Thine.

Thou hast cast, perhaps,
The ray of hope that, rising
In my heart, leads me
To shun ceremonies and shyness
And be Thy own Beloved.

Thy devotion shall be my youth,
And faith my beauty and charm,
Clad in the purity of Thy thought,
With Thy love tingling in my veins,
Do I come to Thee — a humble offering.

Come, Beloved, Come
And take me,
Do not linger.

Come, Beloved, make my home Thine
Thou art the Beloved of All
And yet I hope
To make Thee mine alone.

Come, Beloved, Come
Let me not suffer
Thy separation any more.

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SRI RAMA, OUR HOPE FOR EVER

R. RANGACHARI

That the all-merciful Lord, to relieve the distress of Devas and Righteous Naras chose for Himself a human father, पितरं रोचयामास and became the son of Man, मनुजेन्द्रपुत्र: and delighted in openly calling himself so "आत्मानं मानुषं मन्ये रामं दशरथात्मजम्" is an article of faith with us. But the truer fact is that He, the Lord, is ready to incarnate and actually does so, in our hearts, at every propitious instant. May I draw your attention here to the pregnant words of Patmore? 'The one secret, the greatest of all, is the doctrine of Incarnation, regarded not as a historical event, which occurred thousands of years ago, but as an event which is renewed in the body of every one who is in the way to the fulfilment of his original destiny.'

Whenever we find ourselves getting submerged by wrong impulses and unrighteous thoughts, but we feel at least unhappy to such a situation, as being not our normal state (अस्वस्थ:), there is the Lord incarnating in us, which we should not fail to recognise. I would understand the famous assurance of Lord Krishna in this light:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

The thought that Sri Rama will visibly enthrone Himself in our hearts, as and when we desire it, should make us rejoice

सर्वे ह्यनुगृहीता: स्मो यन्नो रामो महीपति: ।
चिराय भविता गोप्ता दृष्टलोकपरावर: ॥

'Blessed indeed are we all that Sri Rama is constituting Himself our Eternal Sovereign Protector! He is the greatest of those that know this phenomenal world.'

So sang in chorus the happy citizens of Ayodhya—young and old, men and women, children at play, townsmen and countrymen.

तरुण्य: वृद्धा: स्त्रिय: च क्रीडमाना बाला: पौरा: जानपदा जना: ॥

This is the song that should arise for ever from hearts—words, sweet alike to the ear and the mind, मन: कर्णसुखा: वाच:, filling the hearts of even animals with joy: Let us ponder awhile over the import of those words:

सर्वे ह्यनुगृहीता: स्मो यन्नो रामो महीपति: ।
चिराय भविता गोप्ता दृष्टलोकपरावर: ॥

Why did the citizens of Ayodhya feel so elated at the prospect of Rama Rajya? Dasaratha himself had put that question to his assembly, which then broke out into a peal of praise of Rama's gracious qualities.

Rama's name by itself bespoke universal harmony. Let us here remind ourselves of the testimony of Maheswara himself:

श्रीरामरामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।
सहस्रनामतस्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥

Apart from this you will notice that the citizens of Ayodhya picked upon one special quality of Rama in the chorus I have referred to already: दृष्टलोकपरावर:. It is this that I would expatiate upon now. With due deference to commentators and scholars, I would get into this phrase, the meaning that Sri Rama, by close contact with mankind had realised well, viz., the limitations of human nature; the recurring frailty that clouds its innate divinity. Was He not स्वदोषपरदोषवित्, he that knew his own limitations as well as those of others?

தன் குற்றம் நீக்கிப் பிறர் குற்றம்
காண்கிற்பின்
என் குற்றம் ஆகும் இறைக்கு.

(Kural)

This knowledge enjoined on him a double standard of conduct, one for himself and one for the rest of his fellowmen. He was a stern taskmaster unto himself willing to take no

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excuse for even an apparently slight lapse on his part; at the same time, his compassion was wide enough to find excuses for even the grossest lapse on the part of others. Sita's famous words to Hanuman,

पापानां वा शुभानां वा वधार्हाणां प्लवङ्गम ।
कार्यं करुणमार्येण न कश्चिन्नापराध्यति ॥

might have overshadowed Sri Rama's words

अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम ।
आनयैनं हरिश्रेष्ठ दत्तमस्याभयं मया ।
विभीषणो वा सुग्रीव यदि वा रावणस्स्वयं ॥

But we may be sure that Sita's frame of mind which would hold no one so blameless as to give him the right to point a finger of scorn at another accorded fully with Rama's open declaration of refuge to all. Sri Rama would always try, if possible, to remove the evil without harming the evil-doer or bearing him any ill-will. Sri Andal brings this out very forcibly in her invocation :

வென்று பகை கெடுக்கும் நின் கையில்
வேல் போற்றி !

In passing, we may remark that this double standard of Sri Rama, was one cause of his giving what to us may seem undue prominence to what the ordinary folk might think or say and as a consequence, resorting to such action as Sita's ordeal by fire and her banishment too.

I will also draw the lesson that in moments of doubt as to which of two or more courses we should pursue at a critical time, we should choose that course which might result in harm to ourselves in preference to the one that might harm others. For if our choice is wrong, we alone will reap its consequences and not make others suffer on our account.

I now want to trace upto a point, how the seed of the essential humanity of Sri Rama was implanted and grew. The story begins in *Anga* which lies desolate under continuous drought. The King of the land bears the name Romapada. The king realized that he was to blame for his country's evils and sought to make atonement. He consulted the elders in wisdom, thus :—

भवन्तः श्रुतधर्माणो लोकचारित्रवेदिनः ।
समादिशन्तु नियमं प्रायश्चित्तं यथा भवेत् ॥

He addressed them as लोकचारित्रवेदिनः— meaning, those that knew fully the way of the world and the causes that led to its rise and decline, from time to time. He asked them to command him to do such atonement as might be adequate to remove the plight that had fallen upon the land. We note that the full responsibility of the Ruler for the ills of the land was admitted by himself. The rest of the story is well known, how *Rishyasringa*—the unspoilt child of nature—was brought into Anga, how thereby the balance of Nature was restored, and how he too found his life's fulfilment resting in conscious equipoise through his marriage with *Shanta* (forbearance personified), thus paving the way for Sri Rama-*Avatara,* in due course.

The point that I am making is that the good-man living in cloistered virtue, ignorant of the ways of the world, can confer no benefit on humanity, apart from his being always in danger of having his delicate equilibrium disturbed. Russel hits the truth when he says that 'it is in the profound instinctive unison with the stream of life that the greatest joy is to be found.' This was what Rishyasringa achieved by his union with Shanta :—

एवं स न्यवसत्तत्र सर्वकामैः सुपूजितः ।
ऋश्यशृङ्गो महातेजाः शान्तया सह भार्यया ॥

Is it not significant that only this pure Soul in instinctive union with the world was chosen to officiate at Dasaratha's sacrifice, which prepared the way for the advent of the Lord? Valmiki records that, at the conclusion of the sacrifice, all the crowned heads that had come there bowed low, before the unique Rishyasringa and took leave of him with their hearts at peace :—

पृथ्वीश्वराः, मुदिताः प्रययुः देशान् प्रणम्य मुनिपुङ्गवम् ।

Was it then any wonder that Sri Rama, whose holy feet trod this earth at the behest as it were of Rishyasringa, took unto His bosom, men lowly in birth, birds and beasts too.

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தொழமை என்று அவர் சொல்லிய சொல்
ஒரு சொல்லன்றே. (கம்பன்)

Having seen how Rishyasringa paved the way for boundless humanity to be born as a Prince in Ayodhya, we may with profit trace the further development of this aspect. The Royal Father, Dasaratha, had ruled the land for many many years, during which period, he would doubtless have come into contact with different classes of people and learnt to understand their nature and put up with their foibles. Naturally, Rama, his most beloved son, became heir to this rich experience. This is beautifully hinted by the commentators of the *Thiruvaymozhi.*

We may also recall here how Dasaratha specifically exhorted Rama to dedicate himself to the welfare of his subjects not only in the recesses of his heart but also in a manner that would make it apparent to his councillors and the general public as well.

भूयो विनयमास्थाय भव नित्यं जितेन्द्रिय: ।
काम: क्रोधसमुत्थानि त्यजेत व्यसनानि च ॥
परोक्षया वर्तमानया वृत्त्या प्रत्यक्षया तथा ।
अमात्यप्रभृती: सर्वा: चानुरक्षय ॥

Kamban makes Vasishtha give the instruction to Sri Rama, laying stress on universal love and bringing out the idea that the people are the life-breath to the Body that is the King

என்பு தோல் உடையார்க்கும்,
இல்லார்க்கும் தம்
வன்பகைப்புலன் மாசு அறமாய்ப்பது ஏன்?
முன்புபின்பு இன்றி, மூஉலகத்தினும்,
அன்பின் நல்லது ஓர்ஆக்கம்
உண்டாகுமோ?
வையம்மன் உயிர் ஆக அம்மன் உயிர்
உய்யத் தாங்கும் உடல் அன்ன மன்னனுக்கு
ஐயம் இன்றி அறம் கடவாது அருள்
மெய் யில் நின்றபின் வேள்வியும்
வேண்டுமோ?

As we all know, the finishing touches to Sri Rama's training were given by Viswamitra,—the unique friend of the universe. I shall refer now to the significance of just one episode—the peerless story of Ahalya's redemption.

The Ramayana overflowed from the compassionate heart of Valmiki that could not bear to hear the wailing cry of the bereaved female curlew. In a true sense, he was reborn that instant :—

तत: करुणवेदित्वात् अधर्मोऽयमिति द्विज: ।
निशाम्य रुदतीं क्रौञ्चीमिदं वचनमब्रवीत् ॥

Valmiki's record is of the travail of the individual spirit, as it purified itself in the crucible of life-suffering, till it attained in due course its pristine purity ; and the most high set its seal of approval upon it. He lit a beacon of hope for erring human kind. A conscious sin, however heinous, can be wiped out through conscious suffering and the effort is all that matters. There is indeed greater joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over many righteous ones that have known no fall. No wonder that as men's hearts hardened and thereby grew weak with the passage of time, this living story got petrified, and even great poets like Kalidasa and Vedanta Desika sought to trace in it only the glory of the Lord's feet in quickening into life a piece of rock rather than the acme of human endeavour, aided by God's grace.

But this is not what Sri Rama saw and felt, when the redeemed Ahalya swam into his ken, as he entered her desolate hermitage, after listening to her unvarnished account from the lips of Viswamitra.

विश्वामित्रवच: श्रुत्वा राघव: सह लक्ष्मण: ।
विश्वामित्रं पुरस्कृत्य तमाश्रममथाविशत ॥

To Rasikas, the words विश्वामित्रं पुरस्कृत्य may suggest that Sri Rama went to see Ahalya guided by infinite compassion. What did he see? ददर्श च महाभागां तपसा द्योतितप्रभाम्—

A peerless vision of a soul hallowed by long suffering! प्रयत्नान्निर्मितां धात्रा दिव्यां मायामयीमिव— A new form fashioned by the world Artist, with a rare skill that had grown on him, through ceaseless practice. The Pure Soul that shed matchless beauty on its emaciated frame!

How did Rama apprehend this beauty step by step! At first sight, it was like the light of full moon, hardly visible through the cloud and the mist that enveloped it.

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स तुषारावृतां साभ्रां पूर्णचन्द्रप्रभामिव ।

But as he looked on, it grew more distinct and gained in lustre. It appeared as a shining tongue of flame that could not be hidden by the thick smoke that surrounded it.

धूमेनापि परीताङ्गीं दीप्तामग्निशिखामिव ।

As Rama continued to look on, the darkness rolled away and the original splendour of the Sun seemed to burst forth. But there was a difference. This was not the consuming entry of the Sun but its conserving energy that lay preserved in the cooling waters.

मध्ये अम्भसो दुराधर्षां दीप्तां सूर्यप्रभामिव ।

Who but Sri Rama the Pure, guided by infinite compassion, could have seen this lambent light? Was it not hidden to the light of Gods and men through the long long years :—

सा हि-त्रयाणां अपि लोकानां दुर्निरीक्ष्या—यावद्रामस्य दर्शनम् ।

What did Rama do? He with his Brother Lakshmana bent low and took the dust of her feet on to his head as it were.

राघवौ तु ततस्तस्याः पादौ जगृहतुस्तदा ।

The Princes felt purified by the dust of her feet. What did Ahalya do? Did she feel embarrassed by the adoration of Sri Rama? No, she had burnt out her ego and remembered her Lord Gautama's assurance of Sri Rama's darshan. So she accepted the homage of Sri Rama and welcomed and extended to them the prescribed courtesies, which Sri Rama accepted in the rightful way.

स्मरन्ती गौतमवचः प्रतिजग्राह सा च तौ ।
पाद्यमर्घ्यं तथातिथ्यं चकार सुसमाहिता ॥
प्रतिजग्राह काकुत्स्थो विधिदृष्टेन कर्मणा ।

What a blessed sight this was to the guardians of the World? They rained flowers from the sky and burst into raptures with song and dance.

पुष्पवृष्टिर्महत्यासीद्देवदुन्दुभि निस्वनैः ।
गन्धर्वाप्सरसां चापि महानासीत्समागमः ॥

Still there remained just one thing to make the scene complete. It may be remembered that even at the moment of his righteous indignation over the misbehaviour of his wife Ahalya with Indra, his heart was filled with love and sorrow for her, and he looked forward to his glad reunion with her, in the presence of Sri Rama the Compassionate, after she and he too had purified themselves by conscious suffering and penance.

इह वर्षसहस्राणि बहूनि त्वं निवत्स्यसि ॥
वायुभक्षा निराहारा तप्यन्ती भस्मशायिनी ।
अदृश्या सर्वभूतानामाश्रमेऽस्मिन्निवत्स्यसि ॥
यदा चैतद्वनं घोरं रामो दशरथात्मजः ।
आगमिष्यति दुर्धर्षस्तदा पूता भविष्यसि ॥
तस्यातिथ्येन दुर्वृत्ते लोभमोहविवर्जिता ।
मत्सकाशे मुदायुक्ता स्वं वपुर्धारयिष्यसि ॥
एवमुक्त्वा महातेजा गौतमो दुष्टचारिणीम् ।
इममाश्रममुत्सृज्य सिद्धचारणसेविते ॥
हिमवच्छिखरे रम्ये तपस्तेपे महातपाः ॥

And now that time had come, he hastened back to his old hermitage and silently stood by the side of the hallowed Ahalya, who found fulfilment of her life then. This sight filled the hearts of all Devas with joy, and they sang in chorus a simple Mangalam to the redemption of the fearless Ahalya :

तपोबलविशुद्धाङ्गीं गौतमस्य वशानुगाम् ।
साधु साध्विति देवास्तामहल्यां समपूजयन् ॥

We may be sure that Indra, the chastened Lord of the Devas too was there and the noble Ahalya could look at him without embarrassment! Now Gautama and his *Patni* had perfect peace in their hearts and they together offered hospitality to Sri Rama who felt he was honoured thereby. Then the Blessed couple set out on a joint quest towards still greater perfection. Sri Rama had learnt his lesson of humanity well from this incident and he no doubt felt himself a debtor to Ahalya and Gautama and to his Guru Viswamitra, that had guided his steps to the hermitage. Viswamitra now realised that Sri Rama, *the Son of Man,* was fit enough to be united with Sita, *the Daughter of the Earth* and took him to Mithila.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S MODE OF TEACHING

SWAMI VIRANANDA

We are generally believers in God. Some believe in a personal God or in some incarnation of God. Others believe in an impersonal God and do not acknowledge that God Himself can incarnate in the human form. Besides these there is a class of people to whom God is just an imagination. Superfluous to say, they declare themselves to be agnostics or express their inability or unwillingness to think over the existence of God. Their minds often run in the rut of self-seeking pleasure. We can broadly classify people under these categories not only in India but also elsewhere. The last mentioned class is predominant and the people of other categories are very few. To the majority enjoyable worldly materials are worthy of paying attention to and they feel no necessity for God; worldly comforts by all means are sought for and God is a superfluous thing to them. Thinkers among them believe in the spread of education to help people gain material comfort and the execution of various plans and projects for acquiring more worldly goods.

In western countries, where education is a means for man's material comfort mainly, we find a great achievement. It is because of the influence of their mode of teaching that they are hardy, active and brave. In ancient Indian education we witness two principal systems; one leads to man's material comfort and another helps to place family, society and nation under a common higher ideal so that individual life and social life may be better. At present the leaders and thoughtful people of India are realising the great importance of western education to make the nation prosperous and to march equally with other countries of the world.

Ever since the introduction of western education in India, thoughtful people have been thinking about the proper mode of education and the correct system of teaching that should be adopted for our boys and girls. They have also been perturbed, of late, over the conduct of students who seem to have become indisciplined nowadays. There is no doubt that there are some defects in the present system of education and the parents and guardians are unable to control their wards. There is somewhere some lacunae in their character which prevent students from paying proper attention to their studies and their conduct too is far from satisfactory. Why is it seen amongst the students? Is the current western method of education the only way to solve the problem? Or is the Indian ideal of education too required along with the western education for it? Let us see if Sri Ramakrishna's mode of teaching can be of any help to Indians in the present situation.

The name of Sri Ramakrishna is well known in this country and also in other parts of the world. Some pay the highest tribute to him as an incarnation of God and there are also some who, though they do not regard him as an incarnation, pay their respects to him for his spiritual height and pure character. Actions are to be judged by effects and we all know about the effects of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings on Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda once remarked that Sri Ramakrishna could make hundreds of Vivekanandas out of mere dust lying by the road side. How could that be? If we cannot conceive of Sri Ramakrishna as an Avatara we can at least consider him as a great man. In any case, we have to ponder over his teachings deeply if we want to know how characters like those of Vivekananda and his other brother disciples could be produced by his teachings. What is the secret of their change?

When Narendranath first came to Dakshineswar he asked Sri Ramakrishna, 'Have you seen God?' His simple and bold answer was, 'Yes, I have seen Him. I can also show

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you if you wish.' Narendranath was astonished, as he did not get such an answer before from others whom he had asked the same question. Out of curiosity he used to come to him off and on and began to watch his words and actions to find if there was any inconsistency between these two. He found none. And Sri Ramakrishna in the process began to transform the character of the sceptic, rational, westernised Narendranath. The first principle in Ramakrishna's teaching was absolute sincerity. Sri Ramakrishna never tried to destroy the natural law of growth in Narendranath, but tried to help him in the creative fulfilment of his innate personality. Silently and slowly he moulded him and other devotees for their future development through the methods of example, sincerity and pure love. Sincere love for the disciple was the second secret in Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. The result of this method of spiritual teaching was that Latu, a domestic servant of a devotee named Ramachandra, became a knower of Brahman in the latter part of his life. The illiterate Latu in his earlier days served Sri Ramakrishna day in and day out, and obeyed him as if he was serving God Himself. We can realize the effect of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching on his disciples from such and many more instances of transformation of character.

Most of those who came in touch with Sri Ramakrishna were influenced by him for good. It is because of this influence that the libertine Girish Chandra Ghosh became an abstinent and a God-intoxicated soul. Keshabchandra Sen, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, who formerly could not accept God with form did so as a result of Ramakrishna's influence. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar, a fully westernised scientist was greatly influenced and transformed by Sri Ramakrishna's teaching. Many ideal Sannyasins and householders were thus created as a result of his wonderful mode of teaching. His teachings were not confined to the male section of the society but was extended to the female section also. Sri Ramakrishna taught them equally about the ideal of Hindu women.

Sri Ramakrishna's mode of teaching contained other elements also, e.g., strictness and even sternness, where necessary but always tempered with tender love. It is remarkable that a soft motherly heart always went with his strictness. It was only with the object of elevating the character of his disciples that he used to show sometimes his strictness outwardly. All the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna lovingly acknowledged and unanimously appreciated these elements in his teachings. Another characteristic of his teaching was that he would exhort two persons of different temperament in two different ways, although they might be placed in a similar situation. Swami Niranjanananda was prepared even to drown a boat full of passengers as someone of them was telling fibs about his Master and Swami Yogananda in similar circumstances did not even raise the slightest voice of protest against those persons who were speaking ill of his Master. Both of them were admonished by the Master, one for his impulsive temperament and the other for his extreme softness and forgiving nature. Tears also rolled down even the cheeks of Swami Brahmananda, the 'spiritual son' of the Master as the latter lovingly scolded him for his correction. Sri Ramakrishna did not also hesitate to be stern where he found the ego predominant. His strictness with Kristodas Pal and Bankimchandra Chatterjee, two noted men of those days, may be cited as instances to the point. But Sri Ramakrishna had the wonderful tact of healing the wound, wherever he applied the sharp knife of rebuke to cut out the ego.

In spite of his strictness, everyone of his disciples and admirers had the greatest love and reverence for him. While imparting his teachings, Sri Ramakrishna would sometimes act like a friend, sometimes like a father and sometimes like a preceptor and at another time he would carry off their minds with motherly affection and teach them in such a manner that all of them understood their defects and tried to remove them. It is noticeable that the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna never reacted insolently, although sometimes

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they faced strictness in their Master for their faults. On the contrary they tried to get rid of the defects. It may easily be asked how Sri Ramakrishna was so successful in his teachings and how his disciples were so obedient and good-natured? The answer will be evident if it is deeply pondered over.

Swami Vivekananda was once asked what he thought of Sri Ramakrishna and his answer was: 'L-O-V-E Personified'. Some disciples of Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'Alas! we never conceived of his greatness at that time. It was only because of his genuine love that we would come to him. It was so powerful and attractive that we regarded our parents' love as of no account'. His disciples surrendered themselves at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna only because of love and Sri Ramakrishna taught them according to their mental constitution. He had no motive in his love. This immaculate love was so deep in his heart that to get a sight of his disciples, if they were unable to come to him for days, he shed tears, prayed to the Divine Mother for the meeting and sometimes hastened to their residence to see them and to inquire about their welfare. Then he would instruct them as to when and how they should meditate and would impart other instructions of this kind. Nearly mad with his love, Narendranath came to Dakshineswar running all the way from Calcutta. Latu maintained his life-long sleepless nights as he received mild admonitions from the Master about indulgence in sleep at night which, the Master said, should be spent in meditation. Later Latu used to take some rest in the day time only. Girish Chandra went without some meals and shed tears in repentance for his past misbehaviour in a drunken state. Many instances of this nature come to our mind as we reflect on how Sri Ramakrishna conquered the hearts of his disciples through his unselfish love.

We can hardly conceive of his love fully. Where is the spring of such love, that knew no distinction between the poor and the rich, the fool and the intelligent, between men and women? How could he love them all equally? The answer can be given from a single event in his life. Sri Ramakrishna was once so much anxious for Narendranath that he shed tears to see him and became mad with joy when he came. Observing this Narendranath once asked his master, 'Why do you feel so much attraction for me? King Bharata himself became a deer as the result of his too much attraction for a deer; the same must be to you for your attraction towards me'. The reply came from Sri Ramakrishna: 'The Mother of the Universe told me that I see Narayana within you and it is only because of Narayana that I love you. I must not be able to see your face as soon as Narayana within you will vanish from my eyes.' Sri Ramakrishna once, speaking of himself, said to the devotees, 'There is only He behind this body'. The source of his love lies in this realisation. Because of his vision that Narayana or God was in him and in everything, he could shower his love on all his disciples and others. The difference between his love and ours is that we can give it to others out of expectation of something. At best we can love only that which is beautiful and where we find a particular qualification. So our love is hedged in by certain extraneous consideration. Only he can love others with an equal eye who has a sight of the same beloved One everywhere.

Sri Ramakrishna, as a result of his Sadhana, was lifted up to the topmost plane of realization. He realized one eternal truth going through the different doctrines while following the paths of all principal religions of the world. His ultimate realization was that God is one, the difference is only in names and forms. That in itself was wonderful but still more wonderful was his capacity to help others through diverse paths according to their mental constitution, inclination and development. The Shaivas, the Shaktas, the Vaishnavas and even Christians and Muslims found in him their own ideal. The dualists are generally Shaivas, Shaktas, Vaishnavas and so on. The people who have understood Sri Ramakrishna as a realized soul, can conceive in his divine life, the effect of his Sadhana that he had had the

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vision of one God in everything. The believers in the Incarnation of God declare that the Avataras set examples for mankind with their lives and teachings and appear before us to save religion and to destroy sin. This class of people compare Sri Ramakrishna's life and activities with the lives and activities of Avataras like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Shankara, Chaitanya and others and think that he is to be classed with them as an Avatara, nay, he is the embodiment of all doctrines propounded by the Avataras from time to time. Again we notice that the tremendous force of materialism influenced by western thoughts in the nineteenth century could not affect his strong personality. Rather his divine life and wonderful mode of teaching influenced the age and saved the people from the evil effects of materialism.

In this context we may consider our system of education sponsored by a modern secular state and how Sri Ramakrishna's method can be of help to us. This is said to be the age of Science. Modern science is trying to fulfil one of its most beneficent functions, that of discovering oneness in the midst of many. Although devoid of book-learning Sri Ramakrishna applied the scientific method of observation and experiment in the realm of mind and spirit. He put religion into the laboratory of his own body and mind and verified the truth of different religions and sects of his time and spoke about verified truths according to the mental constitution of the disciples. Besides this, there were two principal modes of his teaching. First, his life and activities were the practical demonstration for his disciples. What he realized in his life after sincere practice was taught to others. And again, there was always those elements already mentioned namely absolute sincerity and truthfulness coupled with immaculate love for the disciples. The world-famous Vivekananda and a Knower of Brahman like Latu were created by Sri Ramakrishna through his mode of teaching.

Our students will get the real education if this loving relation exists between the teacher and the taught. The teacher should be such an ideal one that there should not be the least inconsistency between his life and teachings. Secondly, he should possess an unselfish love for the students. That will solve the problem of indiscipline among them. The ideal combination of these two elements will thus bring about a magnificent result producing a new atmosphere congenial for the growth of scholarship and character, which are the objects of all education.

THE MASTER

M. V. B. S. SARMA

At Whose inexorable behest the sun and moon engage in a routine of eternal diurnal march?

At Whose stentorian bidding, the tempestuous waves of elemental intolerance, crawl timidly with a repentant heaving bosom?

At Whose flaming glance, the rumbling Volcanoes like Shiva's third eye spit out the liquid fire removing every vestige of verdant green?

At Whose knowing wink, the glittering stars twinkle and sprinkle the velveteen coolness of a welcome autumn night?

At Whose approving nod, the blazing God of oblation fire sends forth consort 'SWAHA' to deliver the desired goods?

—— He is the Master of our Works, our life, our body and soul and our very existence Here and Beyond.

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GURU ARJUN'S 'PSALM OF BLISS'

(*Translated by Harkrishan Singh* : Continued from the last issue.)

V

Sloka

Those who neglect the Bountiful
And Gracious Lord, the Giver of all,
And turn to pleasures sensual,
Who stick to worldly filth and trash,
They get not even the burnt-up ash
Of true joy. Nanak says, they maim
Their honour, live in utter shame,
For they remain without His Name.

Ashtapadi

(1)

Thou, having grabbed things half a score,
Him banishest from thy heart's core,
If something thou dost fail to obtain
Thy mind goes loury with black stain.
If He likes, He may give thee nought,
Snatch even ten other things ; enchained
To such a God-inflicted lot,
What canst thou do then, O thick-brained ?
Thou know'st, no will nor thought or whim
Can except to what He doth ordain,
Then 'tis but wise to bow to Him
Ten times and ten times over again.
Who harbours ever in his mind
Pure and sweet memory of God,
His being becomes a fit abode
Of bliss and ease of bright rare kind.
Whose heart is driven by and bound
To the Will infinite alone,
By doing, Nanak says, that one
Thing, he all things of world has found.

(2)

Bestows the King of kings, Lord Hari,
On man things countless out of Grace,
So that he eats and drinks, makes merry,
A luminous mirth are all his days.
Ever if God Himself desire
To take things from man's custody,
His ignorant mind shouts angrily,
His heart grows furnace of wild fire.
Thus of his own he throws in dust
His self-respect and eminence,
In him for ever lost is trust,
None keeps in him true confidence.
By whom is given life's each thing
To Him is due all offering,
Let His Will be man's only deed,
God's Fiat but his honour and need.
Then God will make him truly four
Times happier than ever before,
For, Nanak says, the Lord Divine
Is always bounteous and benign.

(3)

Maya has many a lure-device
And manifold loves, worldly ties
That chain blind man to life's endeavour
But none shall fixed remain for ever.
He keeps with shadow his heart's affections
And plants his love with the shade of tree
Which shall with passage of time flee,
Leaving in man depressed reflections.
What things to him his eyes present
All of them are impermanent,
Man his blind urges does not stem,
So zealously is clasped to them.
Who gives his love to the wanderer,
To a person roving everywhere,
He ever repentant shall remain
For his affections gone in vain.
Love of the Name of Hari is,
Says Nanak, giver of ease and Bliss,
When He Himself is Gracious, Kind,
He draws our love to Him, O mind.

(4)

Believe this body transient,
Riches, relationships and all,
False are delusions, ego's veil,
False Maya's lurings ignorant.
False is king's kingdom and his rule,
False youth and property and riches,
False love, lust-craving that bewitches,
False fire of anger horrorful.
False is the pomp of elephants,
Chariots, horses, habiliments ;
Pleasure with friends, world's jovial way,
Heart's laughter with Maya's bright display.

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False breath of trust, infatuation,
False arrogance and ostentation,
False self-assertion glorified
And egoism, vainglory, pride.
Seeking saints' refuge with complete
Surrender lasts through life's worst weather,
My breath, says Nanak, holds together
Only by remembering Hari's Feet.

(5)

False are the wide ears given to heed
Slander of others and calumny,
False are the hands that slake their greed
On others' wealth and property.
False are voluptuous eyes that see
And glut their lust on others' wives,
False is the covetous tongue that drives
Its padded flesh to flavours free.
False are feet ever on the move
With dark and evil inclinations,
False is the mind whose leaping love
Fastens on other men's possessions.
False body having no attraction
To philanthropy and charity,
False nose that longs to smell infections
Of evil and depravity.
Says Nanak, without illumination
Are false all senses. Body's aim
Finds its fulfilment in meditation,
Unending, on Lord Hari's Name.

(6)

Man doth his life in folly fritter
Away; his moments pass in vain;
Transparency, pureness he cannot gain
Without truth,—however he may flitter.
His body blind without the Name
Is symbolled worthlessness and shame;
From his impious ugly mouth doth swell
Offensive and repugnant smell.
Without remembrance of Lord Hari
His night-days fleet in futile flurry;
His life goes waste and unfulfilled
As fields without the rains, though tilled.
As useless rusts the wealth of misers
So too man's acts and working ways
Are fruitless efforts; unrealisers
Without Lord Gobind's love are Lays.
Blessed are the men in whom resides
Pure Name of Hari. Nanak says
Spring from my heart to them free tides
Of sweet deep-felt self-offering praise.

(7)

Man's actual deeds and his life-earning
Belie his outward semblances,
In mind there is no trace of yearning
Affection, yet words love profess.
The Omnipresent Lord is wise
And dexterous, He knows all and sees,
Him show-formations do not please,
No mask of man Him satisfies.
Man follows not the Verity's path
And yet to others gives advice,
Thus he in self-deception plies
Between the states of birth and death.
Within whose heart the Immaculate Lord
Is present ever and a day,
By his true teaching, wisdom-word,
World crosses the sea of mortal fray.
On whom Thy Love's Grace is bestowed,
Alone they know Thee, Gracious God;
Nanak's meek heart of calm emotion
Yearns for their feet's delight, devotion.

(8)

O lift thy prayer ever ascendent
To the All-Knower Lord, Transcendent,
Himself He wills and shows the way,
Himself He executes His Say.
Himself He takes His men across
The worldly sea of turmoiled woes;
To some He shows His presence near
To some He shows He's far and drear.
He does not crude devices use,
He is removed from trick or ruse,
He knows the working, law and role,
The ways and story of the soul.
On whom He throws His Pleasure's Glance,
To him He gives His vast Affection,
In every spot and circumstance,
Pervades His Presence of Perfection.
On whomsoe'er He casts His Grace,
He is His servant; Nanak says
In meditation nights and days
He remembers Hari, sings His Praise.

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SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

(Continued from the last issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

In Rajputana — Khetri and Malsisar

In accordance with his instruction I started for Khetri. Khetri is eighty miles from Jaipur. It was the first time I stayed at Khetri for a month and a half as a guest of the prince. In his library I read all the works of Theodore Parker and had discussions on Indian history and Sanskrit poetic literature.

As I had but a poor knowledge of Hindi I used bad grammar in my conversation and the courtiers laughed.

Then at the invitation of Sardar Bhursingh, a kinsman of the Raja, I went over to his place at Malsisar and spent the Chaturmasya period there. For two months I stayed at the cemetery of a Jain Sadhu, living on alms (Madhukari). In the Chaturmasya period I studied Vedanta and the Sanskrit and Hindi languages. While at the temple of the Jain Sadhu I was a regular student of Pandit Sitaram on the *Sankara-digvijaya* (conquest of Sankara).

From Sitaram I learnt that Narayan Sastri, a famous scholar of Nyaya philosophy and a devotee of the Master, was the first to preach here that Sri Ramakrishna Deva was an incarnation of God, and it was many years ago. The Sastri belonged to the Sekhawati division in Rajputana.

For long eight months I lived in this part of Rajputana and as I moved from village to village I had a direct acquaintance with the condition of both the rich Sardars (chiefs) and the poor tenants. I exercised my mind as to how to allay the sufferings of the poor tenants. I felt it to be the most sacred duty of a man and took a vow to do it.

By this time I had picked up sufficient Hindi. I now wrote a long letter in Hindi to the Raja of Khetri on the subject, 'Duty of a King to his people'. Therein I described how his poor tenants lived in dingy huts, with scarcely any access to air and light, how they lacked nutrition and proper clothing, how like leeches the rich sucked them dry to satisfy their own love of luxury.

At the invitation of the Raja I came back to Khetri. From there I wrote a letter to Swamiji in America giving a graphic description of the misery of the poor tenants and the luxury of the callous ruler and chiefs. I wanted to know whether I was right in taking the vow and relieving the distressed people.

Every evening I gave discourses on Vedanta at the court. One day a sycophant said to the Raja, '*Ap to sab jante hi hyay*', i.e., whatever I was speaking on Vedanta were already known to the Raja.

This sort of shameless flattery was more than I could bear. In Hindi I spoke out, 'How say you, he knows all! How can a Raja know? Vedanta remains inaccessible to even a Sanyasi who has studied it, day and night, for eighty years, even for his whole life, and your Raja has learnt it all, engaged as he is in sports, in fun, all day and all night! You have spoilt the rich people of this country by this sort of base flattery. This Vedanta is not a simple plaything. The number of books which are mere ancillaries to it is near about three lakhs. If instead, you go on saying in his hearing "He knows nothing, he knows nothing," he may possibly repent and may try to know something.'

The whole court was dumb. The Raja went on saying 'Durust, Maharaj, Durust (Rightly said, Maharaj, rightly said)'. I feared I might have incurred the displeasure of the parasite I had taken to task. But the result was exactly the opposite. That very person said

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to me aside, 'Rightly done, Maharaj, who but you can speak the exact truth? We dare not. We are poor hangers on, so we have to speak in that fashion'.

Thus passed a couple of months after which I got a reply to my letter to Swamiji. I give here extracts from it.

> 'Go about in Rajputana and foster the growth of spirituality and benevolence in the Thakurs (chiefs). Work you will have to do.'
>
> 'Go to the huts of the depressed people of the town of Khetri, preach religion to them and teach them verbally other things, geography, etc.' 'Seize opportunities to go to other places, instruct people, teach people. Activity, worship, knowledge — do all these and then you will have a chastened heart or things will be of no avail — like pouring ghee on cold ashes.'
>
> 'The ochre cloth is not a thing of luxury, it is the insignia of great achievement. Dedicate your all — body, mind and words — to the good of the world (Jagat-hitaya). You have read "*Matridevo bhava, pitridevo bhava* (may your mother, your father be the God unto you)." I would say "*Daridradevo bhava* (may the poor be your God)." The poor, the ignorant, the dullard, the sufferer—these be your gods; service rendered them is the best religious practice for you.'

Effort towards spread of Education

As I got this reply I applied all my energy to action.

My first work was this. The Raja had an Entrance school where only 80 boys attended. I went about to the houses of the ordinary householders and the poor in the capital to secure boys. Very poor people who had never known what education means readily agreed to send their boys. But where there had to be a boy at home for the minimum household work, they sent three boys out of four to school; where there were three they spared two. Thus the numerical strength of the school rose to 200.

The Khetri prince has some 500 families of hereditary servants. In Rajputana they are called golās or chelās. The custom obtains there from very old days. The gola girls are taken into the harem as maids, servants, and if a good-looking girl finds favour with the prince she is made into a Khoayes Queen (just below the rank of the queen herself). The issues of such a marriage get a piece of property as inheritance. Four or five unmarried chelis are given as dowry in the marriage of a princess. These chelis are given in marriage to the chelas of the father-in-law of the princess.

The gola boys are attendants of the officers, parasites, guests of the palace. They are very good-looking but without education. I found them quite fit to learn. But how to send them to school? First the approval of the Raja had to be secured. But a suitable occasion was to be found to make the proposal.

By and by came the day for Rakhi-bandhan (tying of thread round the wrist). In Rajputana Rakhi-bandhan is a unique festival. On this occasion they offer oblations to the manes and feed the Brahmins. The distinction between the high and the low vanishes. The prince and his gateman, drawing seven rupees a month, tie the Rakhi in joy on each other's arms and if the latter be of the prince's caste they eat off the same plate.

At Khetri this festival is held in great pomp on the bank of a beautiful lake. I seized an opportunity on this auspicious day to suggest to the prince, 'Your highness, if these gola boys of yours receive education, will they not be more serviceable?' I brought the truth home to the prince. The Raja agreed and said, 'Please find out the number of gola boys fit to go to school.'

I had already got it ready. The guardians of the gola boys were glad that their boys would have education. Only the guardians of 15 or 16 boys said, 'Babaji (Holy Sire), our boys earn half a seer or three fourths of a seer of maize by rendering service to the officers in their office. That avenue of our earning would be closed if you send them to school. If we receive our due while the boys are at school, we agree to your proposal.' I secured the consent of the prince and the very next day I made 50 or 60 gola boys stand in a row before him. Their ages varied from

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5 to 16. The Raja passed the order, 'From tomorrow they will go to school.' I was satisfied and went out for my dinner.

In the meantime a high official of the prince said to him in private, 'Your Highness, what an order have you passed? Many of these boys serve the officers while they are at work at the office, if they go away to school work will suffer badly.' The Raja reposed considerable trust in this officer. He said, 'All right, they shall not go to school tomorrow.'

I was going to take my meal when this news reached me. I could no more eat my food. Forthwith I ran weeping to the prince. In great worry the prince said, 'How is it that you arrive untimely? Have you dined?' 'Your Highness, you did not allow me to take my meal,' said I, with tears in my eyes. The Raja was much concerned and said, 'How is that?' Still shedding tears I said, 'Your Highness passes an order and the next moment he rescinds it.'

'The office-superintendent reports,' said the prince, 'that many gola boys have their work at the office. The office-work will suffer to a very great extent if they be removed.' 'Your Highness,' said I, 'for a long time I have been watching. Please let me narrate the works they do at the office. If a clerk yawns while writing they have to snap their fingers. They follow the officers with files to their homes where they do the menial work and come back to the office with them. Would you kindly explain what work will suffer?'

The prince burst out laughing and said to an officer nearby, 'Can you contradict what Babaji says?' The officer was mute. 'Your Holiness,' said the prince, 'please go to dine, I shall pass an order according to your wish.'

'You will, Your Highness! The order must be passed even now, or I will not touch my food.' Fearing that a Sanyasi would go without food at his palace the prince passed the order then and there. Hearing of my victory the queen-mother was very glad and sent three or four gola boys of four or five years of age from her harem to be students at the school.

Next day the strength of the school rose from 80 to about 250. As there was no competent Headmaster I brought down from Meerut a Bengalee M.A. and appointed him to the post. Then I formed a committee. In the sittings of the committee the boys used to read essays written by them and high officials and other gentlemen addressed the boys, giving them advice.

(To be continued.)

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE HINDU SOCIETY

N. C. ZAMINDAR

When the whole world is in a melting pot and man is trying to map the limitless space it is not at all surprising that the oldest society on this planet should also find itself in a condition of dissolution. The old bonds, the cherished traditions, the beautiful symbols, all seem to be crumbling under the weight of our own social hypocrisy. We have not lived up to the demands of the time. It is not in a mood of self-pity that one must think about the future but one must be realistically optimist.

What is after all the basic thing which we should care for the future of a society? The answer is, the young members of the society. It is the flowering season which should be preserved against the cruel blasts of polar winds. But it is a cruel reality to find that no efforts are being made to preserve these flowers and they are being left to the mercy of learned confusion of the half-baked scholars and their text books.

In fact, except talking all sorts of platitudes and writing a good deal of similar stuff the

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venerable 'vanprasthas' have done little, to impress the younger generation by their examples. The older generation has turned cynical and consequently hedonistic in its attitudes towards life in general. In the upper circle of the Hindu society we find the craving for material comforts and pleasures inflated to a high degree. A five minute talk with the older people will show up the image of the spiritual pygmies that they really are. They are upset at the seething chaos but they are hopelessly helpless. They stare blankly. Many try to practise one or the other sort of spiritual discipline but their day to day life rather betrays their lack of earnestness.

Spiritual life has always been likened to the walking on a razor's edge. The realization of the self is not a child's play. But the vanprastha age-group of Hindu society thinks that by reading an almirah full of religious books, by engaging in learned disputations and by delivering sonorous discourses one can convince oneself that he can realize the self. Some older people sometime go to the holy places, take bath in the sacred waters and bow to the images but they remain without deep samskaras. The gravitational pull of the earth draws them to their past favourite haunts and they again relapse back into their old way of life. The medical science states that physically, relapse in a disease, is the worse state of a patient. The spiritual science also warns us against the danger of utter collapse in the condition of a relapse in matters of the spirit.

The props of the intellect once broken lead to the crumbling of basic value-structure. This condition cannot perhaps then be improved in the particular life-cycle. It is unfortunate that such cases are increasing in India and we ought to feel concerned about them.

The so called Hindu middle class consisting of the educated salaried group, businessmen and other leisured classes though boosted in the writings, have been blown off the scene of reality. They have become paupers and hence do not occupy the middle position. Superior in intellectual discipline, immensely proud of Hindu heritage they stand on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. They are all the time engrossed in making their both ends meet and solving the social crises and tensions. The economic struggle is so keen that they are left with no time to cultivate the deep bonds of affinity with the younger generation.

The younger generation sees the religious observances and practices of the elders but having no faith in them and seeing the wasteful expenditure done in the name of religion or spirituality it revolts and rebels at the very first opportunity.

The elders try to reason but the arguments of the neo utilitarian generation are rather strong and they fail. Thus many stresses and strains are created. The elder orthodox generation definitely feels like a fish out of water. Only the physical infirmities and economic dependence force the elder people to remain together with the younger ones in the same house. The living together is a very unhappy affair but the younger generation somehow permits the painful drama to go on.

The social group from which most of our leaders of the previous generations in all fields came, remains only as a name. Some persons do pin their hopes in that group but to be blunt it is dead and there is no hope of its staging a come back. The efforts of this group to revive the sense of old loyalties can only be explained as useless stunts to glorify oneself.

The labourers and the farmers, who are the economic beneficiaries of our planned progress have been taking lessons in becoming 'superior' to others.

The totems and legends of sub-castes and sub-sub-castes are being revived. All India societies of castes are becoming a fashion. The elders who have faith but little or no depth simply fall prey to the wily self-seekers. There is little room for religion, culture and heritage of Hinduism, of which we are proud.

Unfortunately, politics, the handmaid of the crafty, has also tried its wily hand in capturing and exploiting this feeling and pattern of behaviour.

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Dr. M. N. Srinivasa, one of our leading sociologists, has described these tendencies as the 'Indianization of the villages'. I will like to call it, popular Hinduism's revival among the masses.

The younger generation of this group finds a peculiar satisfaction in the glorying of the caste group and its totem. It is what we can call the eruption of the irrational and therefore also irreligion.

The uneducated elders, cannot be expected to see the political tricks behind this revival and the middle aged group simply try to exploit this for its political leadership and bossism and help at the time of elections.

The overall picture is gloomy though it cannot be said that things cannot improve. To me it seems that we require special efforts in the direction of creating a vital leadership of elders who can make an earnest effort in becoming the examples of ideal vanprasthas. They should, as a first step, leave aside the material ends with determination and risk everything to keep aloft the torch of our heritage burning.

Everything has its price and it is therefore foolish to expect that we can get the thing called religion without making payment. It is cash down business. If we at all want to have the goods of the spirit, let us pay the price, before it is too late. Time once lost can never be regained.

LORD BUDDHA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(*A STUDY*)

H. K. SEN

As India is moving to-day behind Lord Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna, it may be of some interest to us to know what they gave to humanity.

Gautama was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and was brought up in a princely style by Raja Suddhodhan as a future heir to his kingdom of Kapilavastu. But the sight of a decrepit, a sick and a dead man brought home to his mind the transitoriness of the earthly life and possessions. The serene countenance of a renunciate, however, impelled him to have a resolute desire to go in quest of the way which may bring cessation of birth and death.

Sri Ramakrishna was born in a poor brahmin family at Kamarpukur as one of the sons of Kshudiram Chatterjee with a mind which was kept unclouded by his aversion for an education aiming only at procuring livelihood. So the virgin mind of Sri Ramakrishna had a natural evolution unfolding Vedic truths and wisdom which he scattered for the benefit of humanity in the course of his conversational talks.

Both Sri Ramakrishna and Gautama had to undergo rigid spiritual discipline under the guidance of more than one spiritual preceptor; but the evolution of both outstripped their limitations and liberalized their views.

One can gauge the depth of Gautama's renunciation from the Biblical saying that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. But the prophet of Bihar as well as the sage of Bengal were ideals in the field of renunciation. Sri Ramakrishna too tasted luxury in his later years without being absorbed in its glittering spell as late Mathuramohan Biswas, a worthy and liberal-minded son-in-law of Rani Rashmani of pious memory, who founded the Bhawatarini Kali temple at Dakshineswar on the sacred bank of the Ganges, spent liberally to satisfy his fleeting whims. But that was but a temporary phase in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Ordinarily, he could not even touch a coin without feeling a painful twist of hand.

Both were married but Gautama begot a son, Rahul by name, whereas Sri Ramakrishna

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had no physical consummation of the marriage. But both Gopa and Sarada Devi were true *Sahadharminis* as they shared in the enlightenments of their pure and pious partners-in-life, who too held womanhood in high respects so much so that Buddha appointed Gopa after her initiation as head of the Buddhist nuns whereas Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Saradamani as an emblem of the divine Mother and spiritualised and trained her to bear the burden of the Ramakrishna order after his demise.

Both were equally humane and entertained unbounded love for all creatures; Sri Ramakrishna felt the pulse of life even in plants.

Both practised great austerity before their illumination, and subsequently became advocates of the middle path. Gautama founded a new sect, Buddhism whereas Sri Ramakrishna made a synthesis of the prominent religions by undergoing their discipline and declared that as all rivers, straight or meandering, come to the ocean so all bye-paths of religion, smooth or crooked, lead but to God. He believed in the personal as well as the impersonal aspects of Godhead. Conversion was no creed with Sri Ramakrishna. Buddha, however, was not explicit about ultimate Reality although he admitted that behind the constant changing factors of the universe there is something underlying it which is immutable. His aim was *Nirvana*, through self-realization. He said to the weeping Ananda on the eve of his *parinirvana*, that Buddha was not a person, but a realization and that any of them might attain it. Sri Ramakrishna however laid equal emphasis on Karma, Jnana and Bhakti, and was thus a living embodiment of the teachings of the Gita in modern India.

Buddha's eight-fold path—right realisation, right thought, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right exertion, right mindfulness and right living in a cheerfully conscious state of perfect equanimity—can be practised only by undergoing rigid disciplinary training and helpful guidance of an experienced Buddhist Bhikshu; but anybody may ennoble himself by understanding the spirit of the homilies of Sri Ramakrishna so simply and lucidly elaborated in *Kathamrita*—the Bible of modern India—through conversational talks.

Both laid stress on the spirit of service; cultural, educational, social and charitable institutions were organized by the followers of Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna; but their ideal of service was not the same. Buddha's spirit of service was an expression of universal love whereas Sri Ramakrishna's spirit of service was worship of divinity in man.

Temple worship received an impetus through the Buddhists when the corporal relics of Gautama Buddha were enshrined in beautiful stupas by his devoted followers in adoration of their master. Later on his personal images were installed and worshipped in beautiful Viharas in all lands where Buddhism made a headway in course of time. Thus Buddhism brought a renaissance in art in the land of its birth as well as in countries which espoused Buddhism in later years. Similarly in modern India, the devotees and followers of Sri Ramakrishna have given a fillip to art through the installation of his images in beautiful shrines, erected at some of the monasteries, started in his name in India and abroad as well as through superb edifices erected for cultural and social service to humanity. The magnificent temple at Belur is a rare specimen of architecture. Of course, the movement being new, its contribution is not so great.

The Buddhists founded Universities for teaching Buddhist Philosophy to students hailing from different parts of India and abroad and thus made a cultural and spiritual conquest of people in other lands. The Sri Ramakrishna order also established schools, colleges, technical institutions, etc., for the expansion of education and started Maternity homes, Hospitals, Dispensaries and T.B. Clinics for rendering service to humanity irrespective of caste, creed and colour. So the World owes a good deal to Lord Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna.

May their kindly light be the pole star of our lives.

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SCRUTINIZE YOUR MOTIVE

T. R. RAJAGOPALAN

Every one who has closely followed the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna cannot but come to an irresistible conclusion that practice of 'Sadhana' is imperative on the part of spiritual aspirants and it is absolutely necessary for chalking out our life in such a way that we do not get ourselves committed to further and further Karmas and thereby put ourselves in permanent bondage. Pravritti Marga and Nivritti Marga are the two ways for our choice. Pravritti Marga is the way which is taking us far far away from our ideal and Nivritti Marga takes us slowly and surely towards our ideal.

The mind which is both our enemy and our friend according to our aptitudes contributes to a very large extent towards our extinction or evolution. If it is controlled and made to act in the way we want, evolution and expansion into Cosmic Consciousness and merging into the Original becomes easy and if we are slaves to it, we become weak and selfish and get ourselves enmeshed deeply into Samsara and go on taking birth after birth in fulfilment of our innumerable desires nurtured into our heart continuously without any hope of redemption.

Renunciation of desires and egoism is the only way for reaching our ideal. For this the mind must be purified by purging itself of the past impressions recorded after every one of our sensual enjoyments which go on inducing gratification of each of our desire. Rather we should aim at achieving 'Manonāsa' when only it will be possible for us to merge our individual ego into the Cosmic Consciousness of the Indweller, the Atman. This cannot be accomplished unless we are extremely vigilant about the functioning of our mind. Sri Ramakrishna was repeatedly advising the aspirants to renounce the 'Woman and Gold' which alone are the cause for our bondage. Every thought tending towards it should be curbed and rooted out at the very moment it arises in the mind, by practice of discrimination and dispassion. This can be done also by 'Vichara Marga' taught by Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai.

By prayer and meditation, we can achieve unruffled calmness and peace of mind. Regular meditation on our chosen ideal produces in us spiritual current by the help of which we can easily mould our minds to facilitate to pursue our path.

This dynamic current which flows on continuously enables our thoughts during the course of our day's activities to be merged in our Ishtam, Ideal. It also helps us to maintain the Awareness, the inner balance, without any interruption.

Sri Ramakrishna never failed to notice, appreciate and encourage such 'Sadhana' practised by devotees of whom whenever he happened to hear. He himself set an example to the humanity by undertaking 'Sadhanas' of rigorous types.

Scrutinizing every of our motive behind our actions to make sure whether it is on right or wrong lines viz., Nivritti or Pravritti Marga, we can always guard ourselves against any pitfalls and make good progress towards our Ideal, Self-Realisation.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say : 'Hold on to a pole and then safely whirl round instead of going about aimlessly and losing yourself'. There cannot be a better guide than Sri Ramakrishna himself to cling to for drawing constant inspiration and we will surely be saved from the bonds of Samsara if only we merge all our thoughts, words and deeds in Him.

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FAITH, ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

P. NAGARAJ RAO

Human life needs a faith to live by and without it, life has no meaning or peace. Inner peace and harmony are impossible without the integration of one's personality. If man has to grow to his full stature, he must avoid and overcome the inner conflict and the attrition resulting from the environment and the age in which he lives. To secure this end, he needs a living rational faith. Whether we like it or not we are all children of science and reason. We are also aware of the serious limitations of science and its power as the absolute instruments for man's progress. Science gives us the mechanics of life. Life is not pure mechanism. Knowledge and power are not ends in themselves. They must become means to a higher end. They must be grounded in love and good life. The ends of knowledge and power are beyond the truth of knowledge and the naked glory of power. The ends are the values of life, which are the outcome of human faith.

In the words of William James our moral and religious values are erected as hypothesis not absolutely clear nor on sufficient evidence. They are the acts of belief or faith.

We have the robust assurance that good life, in the long run, provides the deepest and most lasting satisfaction for us. This is an act of faith in the moral value. We have the unconquerable hope that when we struggle for a right cause, God's hands will reach out to us and bring us success.

Faith is the belief in the chosen way of life. It is an attitude of mind that brings relief to man's mind. It makes life smooth-sailing. 'The man who has no faith, who is ignorant and who doubts everything perishes', says the Gita.[1] Faith is hidden in man. All have it in them. It is a specific form of religious reason. It is essentially intuitive and not assumptive. It is that certain knowledge of ultimate reality which cannot justify itself under scientific criticism. 'Faith is the inner sense of truth.' The Gita describes that the nature of a man is determined by the nature of his faith. 'Man is of the nature of his faith; what his faith is, that verily, he is.'[2] Plato observes, 'such as are the trends of our desires and the nature of our souls, just such each of us become.'[3] The German writer Goethe writes, 'Earnestness alone makes for eternity'. Referring to the nature of faith Tagore observes, 'It is the bird's song of the dawn in the thick night'.

Faith enables us to step out of and break from what is purely empirical. It releases us from the tyranny of the world of things in space and time.

By faith we do not mean the swallowing of a body of doctrines to save ourselves the trouble of thinking. The doctrines must burn themselves into us and must not merely be repeated parrot-like. Faith accepts things with the assent of the entire being. It is not a conditional, partial or hesitant acceptance of things. Faith is the result of our authentic personal experience, arising from our unique intense personal striving. It is not a blind adherence or a blank acceptance. It has its own logic. Pascal declared, 'The heart has its own logic which the head knows not'. Faith is not blind, it looks at all current creeds and enquires into things with the strength of its entire of being. 'Faith is the precondition of all systematic knowing, all purposive doing and decent living.' Faith is a powerful sentiment. It keeps us alive and gives us the strength to fight all the temptations that assail us.

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[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 40.

[2] Ibid, XVII, 3.

[3] Plato, Laws, 904 C.

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Faith moves mountains. It alone inspires the inextinguishable hope and the feeling of the certainty of the victory of the ideal, even in the most forlorn stage of our fight. It does not give quarter to despair. It shuns sloth. Faith feels that there is cosmic backing for its cause. It assures us that a righteous cause is ordained to be victorious. Faith is not a naive attitude to things. Faith requires strength to believe. Faith is not a superstition for Naturalists and agnostics to laugh at us. It is a tower of strength. The wise psychiatrist, Erich Fromm writes :

> "Can man live without faith ? Must not the nursling have faith in the mother's breast ? Must we all not have faith in our fellowmen ; in those whom we love and in ourselves. Can we live without faith in the validity of the norms of our life, indeed without faith man becomes sterile, hopeless and afraid to the very core of his being."[4]

[4] Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 198.

RAMANANDA

NONIKA HANDOO

Against the dark sombre setting of the thirteenth century, the drama of blood-thirsty Muslim invasions was repeatedly being enacted. Torn with political strife, the trampled soul of the motherland had atrophied, while the entire north Indian stage rocked with destruction. The impact of Islam had seriously endangered the survival of Hinduism, therefore religion to preserve its dignity and individuality, shrunk into a very narrow shell, becoming more and more sectarian, and eventually was completely in the custody of the Brahmin priests. But no force however potent has been able to give a death-dealing blow to the indomitable spirit of Hinduism, which reasserted itself in the form of a new restlessness, or religious renaissance that had far-reaching effects on all spheres of activity. To give religion a new interpretation and to revitalise the faith of Bhakti, the soil of India gave birth to the genius of Ramananda, who gave a fresh lease of spiritual life that could withstand the challenge of Islam.

Both a religious leader and social reformer, Ramananda occupies an eminent position in the history and development of the Bhakti cult. Sri Jadunath Sinha states :

> 'The origin of the cult of Bhakti in Hinduism is shrouded in mystery. The germs of this cult are found in the Vedic Hymns and Upanishads. The doctrine of Bhakti or single-minded devotion to God, is clearly evident in the later Upanishads. It blossomed forth fully in the epics, and later 'devotional literature.' (*Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. 2, p. 48.)

Narada the apostle of Bhakti has defined it, 'as intense love for God'. It is a monotheistic religion of loving communion with the Supreme Person, or God. This faith of grace owes its source to the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata Purana and Sandilya Sutra. Ramananda's re-statement of Bhakti, the crystallisation of its spirit and form, is as significant as a new discovery. Hence he is the very fountain-head of this gigantic movement.

Ramananda was fifth in apostolic succession to the sage Ramanuja, who was the grand-disciple of Yamunacharya, and in direct line of succession to the Vaishnava teachers of the south. Ramanuja was the founder of Vishistadwaita or qualified monism ; his religion was for the intellectual few, but he sowed the seed for dynamic personality of Ramananda to preach his gospel of love.

We may be fairly certain, says Dr Grierson, 'that Ramananda was born in 1299', in the city of Prayag the modern Allahabad, in a Kanyakubja Brahmin family from South India. Thus the torch of faith was brought from the south, which was still a centre of Indian culture, to what has been described as 'the subjugated and distracted north'. From the time of his birth, his father Punya Sadan and

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mother Susheela had been advised by the family priest, to feed the child on milk till the age of three, not to take him out, to prevent the child from looking into a mirror, and requested the parents to fulfil all the wishes of the infant. Despite the strangeness of these rules, the parents abided by them. These were perhaps, an indication of the talents of the child.

A veritable child prodigy, Ramananda had a remarkably retentive memory. Once Punya Sadan, his father, an authority on grammar and yoga, was reciting the Ramayana. Engrossed in his recitation, he was oblivious of his son sitting by his side. Great was his amazement, when he discovered that Ramananda had automatically memorised all that he had heard. Even a learned audience was equally astonished at this spectacular mental feat of the child. At this rate, by the age of three Ramananda knew several books by heart.

One day he playfully picked up his father's conch-shell and blew it, and lo, the sweetest strains of music spontaneously showered from it, hearing which the proud father happily gave the conch to his gifted son.

At the age of eight, Ramananda's Upanayana Sanskara (sacred thread ceremony) was performed, and subsequently he left for Banaras for further studies. Seeing the determination of Ramananda to live in Banaras, his parents accompanied him and lived with Omkareshwar. When Ramananda was twelve he had completed a comprehensive study of the scriptures.

Later on, his family tried to arrange a marriage for him, but being adamant on remaining single and leading a life of dedication and prayer, he did not yield to family and social pressure. Ramananda then became the disciple of Swami Raghavananda, who was a prominent teacher of his time of the Sri Vaishnava school founded by Ramanuja. On the banks of the Panchganga, under a thatched roof, Ramananda started practising meditation. Afterwards he was persuaded to shift into a hut on a higher ground built by his disciples, where he continued to follow his spiritual pursuits. Day by day, his influence and fame spread further and further, and his ashram became a sanctuary where sages and scholars came to pay their homage.

Four times a day Ramananda blew the conch-shell and sang devotional songs. All those who heard it were charmed by his clear voice and the sweet melody, and crowds congregated around him to drink the nectar of divine music. But the presence of the multitude disturbed his mood, and finally he was obliged to stop blowing his conch-shell, except once in the mornings, which he did for the welfare of the world.

It is popularly believed that on a particular festival, people from various provinces assembled in Banaras, and went to Ramananda's ashrama, to complain of the injustices of the Muslims. They sought his protection, and desired that the offenders be adequately punished. Swamiji on this occasion said that 'courage alone dispels the dark clouds of misery'. Due to the power of this saint's resplendent personality, the arrogant Muslim priests became pathetic victims of a strange fate. A dreadful curse descended upon them, and they could not utter a single syllable to pray or preach, and were unable even to take the name of Allah; unaccountably they all lost their voices simultaneously. Kings, priests, beggars, in fact all Muslims, were equally distressed about this. Ultimately, Ibanoor and some other mirs concluded that this could not be mere coincidence, but must be the doing of a great saint. Therefore these people, along with some Muslim scholars, and Kabir went to Ramananda's ashrama to unravel this mystery. Legend says that Ramananda upon seeing them, blew his conch-shell, and instantaneously all Muslims fainted and fell to the ground. In their delirium, they saw the prophet Mohammad who asked them to obey the Swami, whereupon they arose from their coma, and falling at the feet of Ramananda begged his pardon. Addressing them the Swami said, 'God does not merely belong to the Muslims, He belongs to the entire world;

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to all mankind. God is One, but dwells in every place and in each heart alike. Listen, ye brothers, it is the One God who preserves, protects and destroys — that one Omnipotent Being is called by various names, only the forms of worship differ.'

A Daniel had come to judgment in the form of Ramananda, who laid down twelve conditions, the observance of which would restore the voices of the Muslim divines, but if any of these promises were broken, the entire kingdom would perish. He said that (1) The Jaziya Tax is unjustifiable, hence it should be abolished. (2, 3) Hindus must not be prevented from building their temples or be forced to abandon their faith or principles. (4) Bridegrooms must not be obliged to get down from their horses when passing a mosque. (5) The slaughter of cows should be prohibited. (6) The propagation of the name of Rama should not be curtailed in any way. (7, 8, 9) The holy scriptures must not be burnt or temples destroyed, nor anyone converted by the sword. (10) Pilgrims must not be taxed on festival days. (11) Women must not be dishonoured. (12) Lastly, if a Hindu went to a Muslim priest, he should be instructed according to his own religion. Beware of the disaster that will befall you, he warned 'if any of these clauses are violated'.

The elder of the Muslim priests conveyed the terms of peace in a letter to the Emperor Jayasuddin Tuglak. The Emperor having verified the story, issued a royal decree, signed and sealed it with the royal crest, and with the beating of drums had it announced in Banaras, that henceforth all the demands of Ramananda were effective as law. After that the Mullahs continued their work undisturbed, and the dignity of the Hindus was re-established.

The Swami went on an extensive South Indian pilgrimage with a band of his devotees and some sadhus, to acquire experience of men. He commenced his journey from Puri and then proceeded to Vijayanagar. Of special significance was Ramananda's visit to Vijayanagar, for at that time, according to Sri Radhakamal Mukherjee, 'the kingdom of Vijayanagara was being founded; the sole bulwark of Hindu resistance to Muslim advance in India'. (*The culture of art of India*, p. 319.) Bukkarai, the king of Vijayavada gave him a very warm welcome, and invited him several times to a feast. One day the Swami giving the king a sermon, said that 'the pursuit of pleasure is exceedingly harmful for a king, and whenever a king is immersed in the pleasure of the senses, that kingdom and family is sure to perish.' At every stage, consolidating the strength of Hindu culture, the Swami went to Rameshwar, and on his return journey visited various other places of pilgrimage.

On his return, the Vaishnava brotherhood refused to accept him in their fold, as they were convinced that he could not have adhered to the strict rules of the order during his travels. Due to this difference of opinion with Raghavananda, Ramananda broke away from the Vaishnavas and his guru, and consequently, became more and more adverse to casteism and preached equality with added zeal and fervour.

A contemporary of Ramananda, a Muslim mendicant called Molana Rashi-ud-din in his 'Tuskirtul Phukra', a book dealing with Muslim fakirs, has given us a glowing description of Ramananda. Speaking of him almost with adoration, he says:

> 'On the banks of the Panchganga in Banaras lives a renowned sage, who has a radiant personality, and is the best amongst yogis. He is the much revered leader of the Vaishnavas, of unblemished conduct, and the embodiment of holiness. He is the knower of divine knowledge, and king amongst the exponents of Hinduism! This pure and noble soul known as Ramananda, only emerges from his holy cave before the break of dawn, to bathe in the Ganges.'

In 1410, a day before Rama Navami, the birthday of Rama, Ramananda addressing his disciples said: 'The essence of all scriptures is the remembrance of God — this is the anchor of all great souls. Tomorrow is Rama

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Navami and I am leaving for Ayodhya, but I wish to go alone. All of you should stay here and celebrate this auspicious day. If I cannot return, forgive me for my sins and for my lack of humility.' These poignant words, full of pathos and dark foreboding, brought tears to the eyes of all the devotees. The next day, though a day of rejoicing, turned out to be a sad one for the followers of Ramananda for the Swami left his body. He henceforth lived in the celestial city of Ayodhya in eternal union with the Lord. Folk-lore says that Ramananda lived till the age of 111; this has been confirmed by Nabhaji in his *Bhaktamala* and has also been accepted by Dr Grierson to be his authentic span of life.

Ramananda preached the philosophy of monotheism. Though he often called his God, Rama, he believed in the one formless God that pervades and sustains the universe. Complete self-surrender and devotion were the steps towards the realisation of God.

> 'His unique contribution to Indian life,' says Kshitimohan Sen of Vishva Bharati, 'was the life of synthesis observed in his teaching: he accepted all that was true and of permanent value in our spiritual heritage — the philosophy of meditation (yoga) and the absolute surrender (prapatti) of the Bhakti cult of the south — and rejected all that was untrue, ephemeral, or rigidly sectarian.' (*The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. 4, p. 378.)

Ramananda made spiritual life truly democratic. He is responsible for bringing religion from the sanctum sanctorum of the priests, to the level of the masses — and of giving all their legitimate right of religious franchise. To quote his own words, decrying the distinction of caste:

> *'Jati panti puche nahi koi*
> *Hari ko bhaje so hari ko hoi.'*

> 'Who asks of caste or birth of people? Those who worship Hari belong to him.'

Members of any sex or caste could join this order; they could share meals and pray together. He tried to establish Rama-Rajya, or kingdom of the Lord on the earth, by purifying the individual and society, by castelessness and righteousness.

The message of Ramananda reached the common man, because he spoke to them in their language, in the vernacular. Following his example his disciples also used the various provincial languages for preaching. In fact, some of his eminent followers like Kabir lacked a formal education. 'It was largely owing to the influence of Ramananda and his followers,' says Dr Grierson, 'that Hindi became a literary language.'

Unfortunately, the little that Ramananda wrote remained unrecorded, and is therefore lost. But one of his beautifully eloquent songs has been preserved by the Sikhs in the Granth Sahib, it enshrines the very quintessence of his philosophy, and is as follows:

> 'Where shall I go? The music and the festivity are in my own house, my heart does not wish to move, my mind has folded its wings and is still. One day, my heart was filled to overflowing, and I had an inclination to go with sandal and other perfumes to offer my worship to Brahman. But the guru (teacher) revealed that Brahman was in my own heart. Wherever I go, I see only water and stones (worshipped); but it is Thou who hast filled them all with Thy presence. They all seek Thee in vain among the Vedas. If Thou art not to be found here, we must go and seek Thee there. My own true guru, Thou hast put an end to all my failures and illusions. Blessed art Thou! Ramananda is lost in his Master, Brahman; it is the word of the guru that destroys all the million bonds of action.' (Translated by Kshitimohan Sen.)

Ramananda belonged to the people and their moral well-being and physical welfare was a cause very dear to his heart. Late in the 14th century it was a time of national affliction, when Timur plundered Northern India and smashed the Delhi sultanate. The devastation that followed in the wake of Timur can hardly be imagined; even an impartial writer like Nehru says:

> 'All along his route he created a wilderness adorned with pyramids of skulls of those he had slain, and Delhi itself became a city of the dead.' (*The Discovery of India*, p. 277.)

Those that survived were forcibly converted to Islam. Later, when these people wished to return to the Hindu fold, due to the rigidity

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of orthodox views, their request was not accepted; but Ramananda defied popular opinion. Owing to the courage and liberality of this large-hearted saint over 500 people were re-converted to Hinduism. It was during such a period of insecurity and national crises that Ramananda dauntlessly preached his gospel of love, and justice. He was a man, before his time, whose vision and foresight surpassed those of his age.

Ramananda had a very wide following of over 500 disciples, containing a vivisection of people from different castes and professions. Of these, twelve belonged to the very intimate circle. Even these were chosen from all strata of society. Nabhaji in his *Bhaktamala* gives us an account of the special disciples which included, Pipa, a soldier, Kabir, a Muslim weaver, Sena, a barber, Dhanna, a peasant, Raidas, a shoemaker; Anantananda, Sursarananda, Narharianand a, Yogananda and Sukhananda were all Brahmins, while Padmavati and Sursari were the representatives of the fairer sex. Amongst these, Raidas and Naraharianand a are famous as being the gurus of Mira Bai and Tulsidas, respectively.

Molana Rashi-ud-din tells us that the followers of Ramananda were known as the Vairagis, or Ramaites and traces the origin of these to the divine mother Sita, the embodiment of renunciation, who initiated Hanuman to her creed, who in turn disclosed it to the world. Thus this organisation came to be known as the Shri-sampraday, in loving memory of Sita. Its chief mantra was called 'Ram-tarak'. The secrecy of the mantra and to remain in an ecstatic condition conduced by the singing of hymns were the essential features of this order. The physical characteristic of this sect was a vertical tilak on the forehead.

Speaking of the influence of Ramananda on the many Muslims who had become Vaishnavas, the historian Radhakamal Mukherjee gives us a very colourful quotation from the *Bhavishya Purana*, that describes these converted Muslims as 'with the tulsi rosary on their necks, the name of Rama on their tongue and the Vaishnava insignia on their forehead.' Giving us a further description of them he states:

> 'They were called samyogis or the re-united, and established themselves near Ayodhya. The Muslim saints and mystics who were going among the masses with their simple monotheism and creed of social and religious equality, now found they had effective rival amongst the Hindu proselytisers. An intense spiritual consciousness, aroused amongst both the Hindus and the Muslims, nurtured a new band of Muslim Sufis on one side and of Hindu Bhaktas, free men of God and lovers of humanity on the other.' (*The culture and art of India*, p. 322.)

Formerly, the two completely alien cultures of the Hindus and Muslims, forced by circumstances to exist side by side, were like the banks of a river fated never to meet, without the bridge of understanding and compromise to gulf their difference. The Sufis and Bhaktas helped to link the Hindu and Muslim thought. Sufism though born in the bosom of Islam was abundantly influenced by Hinduism. We find the Vedantic dictum, 'Thou art that', voiced in the Sufi expression, 'I am truth'.

The Bhakti movement started by Ramananda was strengthened and fortified by his illustrious disciples. Of these, Kabir, Sena and Raidas founded branch sects of their own, but they did not differ from the spirit of Ramananda's teaching. They spread the message of their master to all corners of India. The centuries that followed were marked by a spiritual awakening, specially during the time of Akbar, when the ideals of Bhakti inspired art, literature and music. Its effect was felt in all spheres of cultural activity as well as in the life of the individual and society. What was really remarkable was that from the time of Ramananda, the stream of Bhakti flowed ceaselessly and attracted to its current, saints like Mira, Tulsidas and Surdas who flooded the banks of this mighty river with their singular love for God. We can trace the influence of Ramananda's teaching on Guru Nanak and therefore on the movement of Sikhism. The

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inheritors of this thought have often been both artists and saints, like Tansen, the great musician of Akbar's court. Even today, the spirit of Bhakti is vitally alive and pulsating with animation. The fact that Ramananda created men of such calibre and stature, who in turn inspired multitudes, speaks eloquently of his greatness, and constitutes his living message — of loving communion with God, and brotherhood of man.

चरैवेति

SEEKER ON THE MOVE

Seekers are of various kinds. Some seek wealth. They are often merchants. Others aim at conquests. Neither of these types is primarily concerned with the quest for wisdom. In its own way each group tries its best to keep intruders out of its chosen field. The reason is simple: retention of monopoly or fear of competition.

The earliest Westerners, as the author of *Mystic Rebels* points out, came to India only as conquerors or merchants. The Greek tended to avoid 'barbarians' as a general rule. Persians and Arabs, on the other hand, mixed freely with other races for the sake of trade. We can easily understand why these latter should have spread 'blood-curdling tales of monsters and savages'.

Being a genuine seeker of wisdom, Apollonius was not to be deterred by stories of dangers awaiting him in far-away lands. His intimate associates or disciples stayed back, of course, but he moved on. Two 'secretaries' accompanied him from the start. At Niniveh, an Assyrian, Damis, joined Apollonius and remained with him as an inseparable companion thereafter. He was a sort of 'Boswell-cum-Sancho Panza'. He 'recorded what he saw or thought he ought to have seen.' Dr Schnur says that his diaries, 'preserved in the Library of the Empress' must have been available to Philostratus, the biographer of Apollonius. Damis, says the writer, 'felt' the greatness of his master 'without understanding it'. The wise man could have the luxury of keeping his 'head in the clouds'; but it was left to him, Damis, to worry about the money needed for daily expenses. It must have been very disconcerting to him when the hero persistently refused to accept 'gifts' from admiring potentates at different stages of the travel. Philosophy did not penetrate this Assyrian's 'thick skull'. Naturally he was not admitted into circles where important discussions were held, as for example in India or in Ethiopia. Damis had on such occasions to 'wait outside'. But he jotted down whatever fell from his master's lips. When reproached for having taken down conversations without using his discrimination, rather 'as a dog' would 'pick up crumbs' Damis is said to have replied: 'Aye, if it is a banquet of the gods, surely they will have attendants who pick up even morsels of ambrosia that fall to the ground, lest they be lost!'

* * * *

Apollonius and party, we are told, duly crossed into Mesopotamia. The inevitable Customs Officer ordered that 'chattels' carried by them should be declared. Apollonius used the feminine gender and said he had with him Prudence, Temperance, and Modesty. 'You must register these female slaves,' said the un-understanding man at the post! And Apollonius, with his characteristic wit, remark-

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cd: 'These are not my slaves but my mistresses.' Dr Schnur adds that it is precisely this 'sense of humour' that makes the figure of Apollonius 'life-like' and 'convincing'.

The party came to a Parthian garrison. The governor thought that they were spies and talked to them harshly. How could Apollonius, a proud Greek, 'quail before those his forefathers had so thoroughly defeated'? Naturally he answered with an overawing dignity. And the officer felt he was facing 'no ordinary mortal'. He made amends by helping the party on, and even went to the extent of supplying 'fresh provisions' for the journey!

Then came Babylon, 'the cradle' of science in olden days. The sages there had studied the heavens, 'named the stars and followed their courses.' Wise men still lived there,—'the magi, astronomers and astrologers.' Dr Schnur adds that 'the two terms were to remain synonymous for another seventeen hundred years, at least.' There were also mathematicians there. Apollonius was with them for eighteen months. He studied from them and also taught them much in return. He must have cultivated 'occult' powers there. For when he came to 'the Brahmins of India, he was at once recognized and admitted to their counsels as an equal.' It is said that what he learned in Babylon and in India he set down in a book. He is also believed to have written on 'consecrated objects' and 'talismans'. Arabic writers referred to him as the 'Sahib al-Talismat', the author of talismans. Of course they 'corrupted' his name to Belenus, often 'mistaken for Plinius.'

Wise men behave strangely in certain contexts. At Babylon, for example, Apollonius, the free Greek, refused to prostrate before the statue of the king. His explanation was that it would be a far greater honour for that king if Apollonius could find him worthy enough to be called 'an honourable gentleman'! When later King Vardanes invited him to take part in a horse sacrifice or a royal hunt, Apollonius who abhorred bloodshed, politely declined; and instead of staying in the palace, he took up his residence with a private citizen of Babylon. He nevertheless 'frequented the king's company' and even guided him on 'matters of state', thereby trying to 'mitigate the harshness of barbarian law.' At the time of parting, the king offered various gifts which Damis, with his eye on provisions, would gladly have accepted, but Apollonius, as a true philosopher, resolutely refused to take. He chose rather to divert the king's generosity to 'his hosts and instructors, the magi.' The only gifts he would accept for himself and party were 'riding camels' and 'fresh provisions of dried fruit and vegetables'! The admiring king asked Apollonius what gift he would bring back from India. Apollonius replied: 'Myself'; 'for if the company of yonder people makes me wiser, I shall return to you a better man.'

What humility,—and pride withal!

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

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* We gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr Schnur for all the material about Apollonius included in this as well as other instalments of *Charaiveti*.

Religion is the greatest motive power for realising that infinite energy, which is the birthright and nature of every man. In building up character, in making for everything that is good and great, in bringing peace to others, and peace to one's own self, religion is the highest motive power, and therefore, ought to be studied from that stand-point.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Budhananda was formerly Editor, Vedanta Kesari and is now in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Sri R. Rangachari, a retired Deputy Secretary of Finance, Madras Government, is now Administrative Officer, Neyveli. What is published here is taken from an address of his on a Valmiki Day of the Madras Samskrita Academy.

Swami Virananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order.

Sri Har Krishan Singh is from Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry. A portion of his versified translation of Guru Arjun's 'Psalm of Bliss' out of 4,032 lines have so far been brought out. No further instalments will be published.

Sri N. C. Zamindar, M.A., LL.B., is from Indore.

Sri Hemantakumar Sen is from Jabalpore.

Sri T. R. Rajagopalan is from Sirpur-Kaghaznagar, Andhra.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao is Professor of Philosophy, Dharwar College.

Miss Nonika Handoo is from Bombay.

AN ARGUMENT LOSES ITS STRENGTH

After independence the leaders of India declared secularism as their guide. There was not much opposition to this, for India had the bitter experience of repeated communal riots resulting in much bloodshed and dislocation of life and culminating in the partition of India. The latter brought in further uprooting of lakhs of people from their homes. With this background when the political leaders charged religion to be the root cause, even deeply religious people took it as true. India became secular. From then on in season and out of season, the political leaders have harangued religion and the religionists. Thus developed in India a dull apathy and often an active opposition to religion.

But religion also speaks of highest aspirations, recommends ethical code of conduct and exhorts love of the other man. In our temporary blindness resulting from witnessing the painful bloodshed, we forgot the great service religion could render to society, which task it was performing down the centuries. What is the result? The society which is bound to be restless in this changed world lost its steadying influence. The individual found that he had lost the higher purpose of life, and acquiring the goods of life became the goal of existence. The ethical ideal lost its hold on the people and the means adopted also often became unethical. The younger generation who grew up in the times of repeated secularistic declarations lacked the traditional care of religion. So the baneful effect of secularism is most evident on them. This created an alarm among the rulers. They searched for the remedy and found that the old religion was after all not so bad. And now efforts are being made to bring it back. Naturally their earlier declarations have put them in great disadvantage and they can bring it back only through the back door. Moreover, politics in the West for the last two hundred years was mostly inspired by non-religious or anti-religious ideas. The modern politicians too are in one or the other of the two camps in their ideas, if not in the conduct of their life. So even now we hear the usual blaming of religion for all the ills of society. But now a new and very unhappy thing has happened which directly challenges this fallacious theory which Pundit Nehru and others are very fond of. The recent terrible riot in Assam is the event that must open the eyes of the critics of religion. Its inspiration was

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linguistic supremacy. With the formation of linguistic states the country was turning more and more parochial. The idea is prevalent more or less everywhere. But nobody could dream that things could go so far. Till now it was thought that religion only could foment such oppression for the Muslim propaganda remained a live problem till the partition of the country. But now the realization dawns that there are more powerful fanaticisms too. And linguism is going to be one of the major naughty problems in the foreseeing future causing headache to the leaders. During the communal riots it was repeatedly argued by the religionists that it was not religion that was to blame but the unscrupulous, self-seeking people who are exploiting the religious sentiment of the people. But of course, this could not be accepted, for politicians require some issue to attack to make their speeches effective. Like religion, language is also a great element forming the emotions of the people. In fact, in the secularistic atmosphere it is the most powerful emotion. Now we shall have to face this problem. We are not entering into its discussion. The purpose of this article is only to point out the hollowness of the charges levelled by politicians for all these years against religion. If they are to follow the same logic, they should ban languages too. They may argue, languages are not bad but linguism is so. This was precisely the pleading of the religionists, that religion is not bad, but religious fanaticism is so. But the secularistically trained politicians gave up religion itself, thereby causing so much of dislocation in private and public morals. We hope there will be effort now to reinstate religion in its pedestal and rehabilitate the social morals based on it. At least, the politicians should stop haranguing religion, which creates doubt and faithlessness in the people in general and the youth in particular.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA: By A. Devaraja Mudaliar. pp. 150. Price Rs. 2.25. (Manager, Shri Ramanashramam, P.O. Tiruvannamalai, South India.)

One cannot too highly evaluate books like this, which seek to portray the intimate facts, concerning the life and what the author rightly styles (p. 58) the 'lila' of Brahma Jnanis, whom even the Trinity adore (p. 31). Every anecdote and every utterance have profound and eternal meanings: going through these pages, the reader meets with many such.

Sri Ramana Maharshi was one 'who had completely surrendered to the Divine Will', and was 'like a straw carried about whithersoever the divine current thought fit to bear it' (p. 134). He had been a loving Deity to countless worshippers and his grace was available to every one, to the scholar as well as to the unregenerate, (p. 107) to children, and indeed to every man, bird and beast (p. 121). The 'suhridam' of all was his personal concern: and the numerous incidents narrated by the author spotlight, his anxiety for the happiness and well being of those who had sought his grace. He had been instrumental in warding off the 'Prarabdha Karma' of not a few (p. 102), although of course, he was no miracle-maker (p. 123) and was keen to be recognised as such (p. 123).

He was as much of a Bhakta as a Jnanin. He was doubtless the prophet of Self-realization; still he could not remain unmoved by the pierrean springs of *Thevaram* and *Tiruppugazh*. His tears rolled on when he heard anything magnanimous or noble or at the sight of distress (p. 46).

His 'look' meant many things, 'which were often too subtle or too profound to describe' (p. 109): his own devotees always saw 'His smiling countenance and brilliant eyes, looking at them', even when worshipping at other shrines and temples (p. 120).

It is revealing to hear that the Maharishi had a great fund of humour (p. 135).

Spiritual aspirants and even lay readers, stand to profit immensely by going through this book.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

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A SURVEY OF BUDDHISM: By Bhikshu Sangharakshita. pp. 527. Price Rs. 18. (The Indian Institute of World Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore-4.)

This exquisitely produced treatise on one of the world's oldest religions by one of its most ardent votaries, the first edition of which had been previously reviewed in this journal, leaves nothing unsaid about the Great Teacher or His teachings nor indeed about the historical developments which took place in the wake of the Buddhistic doctrines. A pleasing feature is the incorporation of parallel passages in English poetry to illustrate many of the truths which Gautama Buddha endeavoured to impress on his disciples. Thus the lines in Shelley's Epipsychidion (p. 161), bring out forcibly the theory that 'love' is real, when it is felt for all living beings.

The inter-relation of Buddhism and the teachings both monistic and dualistic of the Hindu Philosophers, is clearly specified at p. 169 although Gautama relied, it is said, 'solely on his own heroic fortitude and strength of mind, discovered the path of enlightenment and proclaimed it as the insight into the true nature of phenomenon.'

Particularly valuable is the account in Chapter III of the Tantra texts and theories; the subject is treated with extreme delicacy and caution (p. 429).

The Chapter on the Bodhisattva ideal, is exhaustive and inspiring. The only desideratum which one would like to indicate is the incorporation, in future editions, of the relevant passages from the Upanishads, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Gita, which indeed had really paved the way for the cult of Buddhism, the essence of which has been set out with admirable clarity in pp. 433 to 500.

Altogether a sumptuous publication, which does place Buddhistic religion and philosophy on a lofty pedestal of its own.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

HIGHWAYS OF GOD: By M. P. Pandit. pp. 165. Price Rs. 5. Sri Aurobindo Study Circle, Madras-5.

The articles contributed by the author to various periodicals, which include also reviews of published works, are now brought out in book form. Together they make interesting reading. Section I dealing with the 'mysteries' of the Life Beyond in the light of certain known facts and of the theories of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is well written. Of special interest are his account of the Siddhars of Tamil Nad (p. 94) and of the poet Subrahmanya Bharati.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

Here are a few new editions of well-known books brought out in paperbound form by the Dover Publications, 180, Varick Street, New York 14, U.S.A.

1. Sir Ernest Barker's *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle* ($1.85) is a comprehensive study of the genesis and development of Greek political ideas. Treating the Greek political experience as a whole, Sir Ernest examines Plato's *Republic* and the *Politics* of Aristotle as well as the major contributions of other Greek theorists.

2. Franz Cumont's *Afterlife in Rome Paganism* ($1.35) considers Paganism's answer to the question of human immortality during one of the most tumultuous epochs of Roman history—between the end of the Republic and the Roman adoption of Christianity.

3. Maurice de Wulf's *The System of Thomas Aquinas* ($1.25) examines the specifics of Aquinas' thought and its relation to Medieval philosophy as a whole.

4. A complete and unabridged edition in two volumes of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* ($2.25 each) has been taken from the definitive Fraser edition of 1894. It contains the four books comprising the 'Essay' as well as Professor Fraser's authoritative 140-page introduction.

5. Josiah Royce's *The World and The Individual* (2 Vols. $2.25 each) is one of the major attempts to interpret the nature of things in a comprehensive manner. It has been provided with a new introduction by J. E. Smith, Professor of Philosophy at Yale University.

THE DIVINE AWAKENER: By Swami Rajeswarananda. Pp. 480. Price Rs. 5.50. (Sevashramam. Eesaeya Road, Tiruvannamalai, South India.)

This, the third edition of the book, fully sustains the sentiments expressed in the review in these columns of the earlier edition that every page and every sentence breathe a high moral tone and a spiritual beauty of concept. The cullings from Yoga Vasishtha (p. 392-407) and from Sankara (p. 431 to 466), add to the value of the book and to its indispensability at the hands of all spiritual aspirants of whatever creed or religion.

Readers of all classes and persuasions are enabled to aspire for a birthless and transcendent

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state, and lead the life of the godly and the wise, 'like the sandal tree that imparts its own scent and sweetness to the axe that strikes it' (p. 470).

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

SANSKRIT—MALAYALAM

LAGHU RAJA YOGA: Translated by Swami Agamananda. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Kalady. pp. 84. Price 50 nP.

Raja yoga is a science, the practical result of thousands of years of study, investigation and generalisation of the various mental phenomena by the Rishis of India, analysing the whole background of the religious faculty of man. The practice of the Rajayoga is a way to realize the Divine within. The method is to make investigations in the mental world by the instrument, mind, itself, by means of concentration.

On this central theme of Raja yoga Swami Vivekananda gave some talks to a group of American disciples and later on these were published in a book form called 'Six lessons on Rajayoga' of which the present booklet is a translation in Malayalam.

BR. DIVYA CHAITANYA.

NEWS AND REPORTS

His Holiness, Jagadguru Srimat Sringeri Sankaracharya Swamigal who is now camping at Mylapore, at the request of the authorities of our Math, was kind enough to deliver a learned lecture at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore on 'Spiritual Life' on Sunday the 11th September. The lecture hall of the Math and the surrounding places were packed with visitors and devotees even before the appointed hour. His Holiness arrived at 6 p.m. and after an opening song, spoke in Hindi for 10 minutes and then in Tamil for nearly an hour. His lecture was based mostly on 'Viveka Chudamani'. In the course of his lecture enriched with profuse quotations of apt slokas, he said:

Our earthly life that begins and ends with a wail is a veritable ocean of sorrow, impermanence and impurity; but the Atman that is the only Truth in the universe is a mine of infinite bliss, is eternal and pure by its very nature. So whoever would like to attain the *summum bonum* of life should realize the Atman. Human birth, a burning desire for salvation, and seeking refuge in a Mahapurusha (great soul) — the three rare gifts of God's grace to man — should be fully availed of for reaching the goal of life. The three proofs for the existence of the Atman are Aptavakya (competent testimony), Anumana (inference consistent with logic) and Pratyaksha (direct experience). Mere logic unless it is based on Shastra can never establish the truth; however the ultimate and the best proof is one's own transcendental experience, which must be acquired at all costs with a view to help struggling mortals in this endeavour. Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada has expressed the method briefly and elaborately in 1 sloka, 5 slokas, 10 slokas, 100 slokas, 300 and more slokas, 1000 slokas and even bigger works. It is the unique claim of Advaita that man can realise perfection in this very world and in this very life on earth. To fulfil this aim, we must understand and meditate on the following truths: 'This Atma is not any one of the sthula (physical), sukshma (subtle) and karana (causal) bodies; it is not any one of the five sheaths (panchakoshas) — Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Ananda maya (the material, vital, mental, moral and blissful sheaths of the soul); it is not the waking, the dreaming, or the deep sleep experience; it is beyond all these.' Immediate intuitive experience of the Atman by the individual is the one and only method of knowing that Truth. Our ego or 'I-ness', is false and, since it veils the Truth, should be annihilated. One way of doing it is to contemplate upon the witness aspect of the soul at all times, in all places and under all conditions; another method is to expand the 'I' and feel that it is omnipresent and all-embracing and beyond all limitations of time and place. If you happen to hate or love any one individual, then hate or love all and even yourself; make it universal; and this will help you to transcend all limitations and see the Truth. This universe of name and form is false from the appearance point of view, yet it has its basis in the reality of the Atman, the one Truth that exists. It is the Atman that appears as the universe of name and form.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII NOVEMBER 1960 No. 7

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

One day both Keshab and Vijay came suddenly to the Master with the members of their inner circle, each party ignorant of the other party's coming. The two parties of the Brahmo Samaj were at that time not even on speaking terms with each other. But persons of both parties, having a love for sadhana, used to come to Dakshineswar as usual.

Seeing the sense of embarrassment even in Keshab and Vijay, due to this quarrel, Sri Ramakrishna anxious to reconcile them said to Keshab: 'Look here, there is Vijay! Your quarrel seems like the fight between Siva and Rama. It is, however, well known that Siva's Guru is Rama, and Rama's Guru is Siva. Therefore it was not long before their quarrel was made up after the fight. But the grimaces of the ghosts, the followers of Siva, and the gibberish of the monkeys, the followers of Rama, would not come to an end! (Loud laughter). Such quarrels take place even among one's own kith and kin. Didn't Rama fight with His own sons, Lava and Kusa? Again you must have noticed, how a mother and daughter, living together and having the same spiritual end in view, observe their religious fast separately on Tuesdays, each on her own account — as if the welfare of the mother were different from the welfare of the daughter. But what benefits the one, benefits the other. In like manner, you have a religious society, and Vijay thinks he must have one too. (Laughter.) But I think all these are necessary. While Krishna, Himself God Incarnate, played with the Gopis at Vrindavan, trouble-makers like Jatila and Kutila appeared on the scene. You may ask why. The answer is that the play does not develop without trouble-makers. (Laughter.) There is not fun without Jatila and Kutila. (Loud laughter.)

(To Keshab and Vijay:) 'Whatever was to happen, has happened. You should no more have ill-feeling between you; let it remain between the ghosts and the monkeys.'

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THE IDEA OF DANA IN THE GITA

The idea of dāna, charity is one of the three cardinal ones in the Gita, viz., yajna, dāna and tapas—sacrifice, charity and austerity. In recent days this term has been much used by Sri Vinoba Bhave and his followers. The word dāna is very widely applied. In political treatises dāna has been accepted as one of the means of subduing a foe. But dāna or gift is primarily religious in motive and so is free from any selfishness. It has been technically defined as complete severance of one's influence and interest in, or proprietorship in any form over, the gift given, and making it the property of the donee completely and for ever. So dāna is gift, benevolence, charity—giving away something to another without any expectation of return. This important idea has been much extolled in the holy scriptures. In various contexts the Gita too speaks of it. Sri Krishna says that along with some other virtues dāna springs from God alone.

> Intellect, knowledge, non-delusion, forbearance, truth, restraint of the external senses, calmness of heart, happiness, misery, birth, death, fear, as well as fearlessness, non-injury, evenness, contentment, austerity, *benevolence*, good name, as well as ill-fame ; —these different kinds of qualities of beings arise from Me alone. (X. 4-5.)

Dāna has been listed as a quality of those who have a divine nature.

> Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga ; *almsgiving*, control of the senses, Yajna, reading of the Shastras, austerity, uprightness....—these belong to one born for a divine state, O descendent of Bharata. (XVI. 1-3).

Human nature has been divided in the Gita into three types—sattvika, rajasika and tamasika. Their gifts as also food, activity and aspiration are also different.

> The food also which is liked by each of them is threefold, as also Yajna, austerity, and *almsgiving*. (XVII. 7.)

These three qualities again pervade every action of man. So though dāna is a divine quality, it can be practised in three ways according to nature or attitude of man.

> 'To give is right'—gift given with this idea, to one who does no service in return, in a fit place and to a worthy person, that gift is held to be Sattvika.
>
> And what is given with a view to receiving in return, or looking for the fruit, or again reluctantly, that gift is held to be Rajasika.
>
> The gift that is given at the wrong place or time, to unworthy persons, without regard or with disdain, that is declared to be Tamasika. (XVII. 20-22.)

Among the four varnas, dāna is a natural quality of the Kshatriyas as tapas of the Brahmanas.

> Prowess, boldness, fortitude, dexterity, and also not flying from battle, *generosity* and sovereignty are the duties of the Kshatriyas, born of their own nature. (XVIII. 43.)

As every action in a way tends to be tainted by evil, methods have been shown of purifying it.

> Therefore, uttering 'Om', are the acts of sacrifice, *gift*, and austerity as enjoined in the ordinance, always begun by the followers of the Vedas.
>
> Uttering 'Tat', without aiming at fruits, are the various acts of Yajna, austerity, and *gift* performed by the seekers of Liberation. (XVII. 24-25.)

Actions may be good or bad. Dāna is a good action and it becomes still more

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good when performed for the sake of the Lord.

> Steadiness in Yajna, austerity, and *gift* is also called 'Sat': as also action in connection with these (or, action for the sake of the Lord) is called 'Sat'. (XVII. 27.)

If actions must produce bad results also, is it not better then to give up all actions? The Gita answers:

> Some philosophers declare that all actions should be relinquished as an evil, whilst others say that the work of Yajna, *gift*, and austerity should not be relinquished.
>
> The work of Yajna, *gift*, and austerity should not be relinquished, but it should indeed be performed; for Yajna, *gift*, and austerity are purifying to the wise. (XVIII. 3, 5.)

If charity is performed as an offering to God, it produces the best results. Sri Krishna says:

> Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou *givest* away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me. (IX. 27.)

Tapas is a very important discipline enjoined in the scriptures. The *Mahanarayana Upanishad* (10.1) identifies dāna as tapas.[1] It again says:

> All creatures praise selfless gift as supreme; for there is nothing more difficult to perform than giving selfless gift. Therefore seekers of the highest good delight in giving selfless gift. (78, 5.)[2]

It accepts gifts as a means of liberation.

> Giving of gift in the shape of *dakshina* is the secure abode of the sacrifices. In the world all creatures subsist on a giver. People remove by gifts those who are envious and malignant towards them. By gift the unfriendly become friendly. Everything is established in gift. Therefore they say that the gift is the supreme means of liberation. (79. 6.)[3]

The *Chhandogya Upanishad* (2.23.1) speaks of the three branches of religious duty. Of these the first consists of sacrifice, study and gifts. Again the same Upanishad (3.17.4) considers austerity, gifts, uprightness and truthfulness as the largesses of the Purusha sacrifice where the life and activities of a man are looked upon as a Yajna.

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (6.2. 16) says that the various worlds in the Arciradi marga are obtained through the performance of sacrifices, gifts and penance. Again it mentions dāna as one of the means of realising Brahman:

> 'The seekers of Brahman wish to realise It through regular reading of the Vedas, sacrifices, *charity* and austerity not leading to death.' (4. 4. 22.)[4]

These means lead to indirect knowledge and purification of mind which culminate in the realisation of Brahman. The same Upanishad gives the interesting story of gods, men and demons approaching their father Prajapati who taught them with a simple word *Da* and it was the men who understood it as 'Be charitable', for men are very greedy. Devas and the asuras lacking in self-control and mercy understood it to mean those virtues. Then the Upanishad says:

> That very instruction this heavenly voice in the form of the thunder-cloud repeats as 'Da, Da, Da': 'Control yourselves', 'Be

---

[1] दानं तपः ।

[2] दानमिति सर्वाणि भूतानि प्रशंसन्ति ।
दानान्नातिदुष्करं तस्माद्दाने रमन्ते ॥

[3] दानं यज्ञानां वरूथं दक्षिणा, लोके दातारं सर्वभूतान्युपजीवन्ति, दानेनारातीरपानुदन्त, दानेन द्विषन्तो मित्रा भवन्ति, दाने सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं तस्माद्दानं परमं वदन्ति ॥

[4] तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन ॥

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charitable', 'Be merciful'. Therefore one should learn these three—self-control, charity and mercy. (5. 2. 3.) [5]

Though dāna is very much praised everywhere grace of God is essential according to the Gita as will be evident when we hear Sri Krishna saying:

Neither by the study of the Veda and Yajna, nor by *gifts*, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, am I in such Form seen, in the world of men, by any other than thee, O great hero of the Kurus.

Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by *gifts*, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as thou hast seen Me. (XI. 48, 53.)

Again He praises yoga which gives the highest realization.

Whatever meritorious effect is declared (in the Scriptures) to accrue from (the study of) the Vedas, (the performance of) Yajnas, (the practice of) austerities and *gifts*—above all this rises the Yogi, having known this, and attains to the primeval, supreme Abode. (VIII. 28.)

So it is clear that devotion, yoga and grace are very important. Hence dāna coupled with devotion is necessary for speedy spiritual progress. But what about people who have not enough to give? Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi has given a fine direction—those who have, must give; those who have not, must repeat the name of God. Wealth is so dear to man that giving it away is definitely a way to measure the sincerity of purpose and so the Gita and other scriptures rightly give much stress on it.

[5] तदेतदेवैषा दैवी वागनुवदति स्तनयित्नुर्द द द इति दाम्यत दत्त दयध्वमिति; तदेतत्त्रयं शिक्षेत्—दमं दानं दयामिति।

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

P. RAMAKRISHNAN

It is mentioned in the writings about Sri Ramakrishna, that at a particular period in his life he felt the urge to have disciples around him, and that on many a night, from the roof of the Kuthir at Dakshineswar, he expressed the call for devotees to come to him. The student of the Taittiriya Upanishad is familiar with the prayer of the sage in the *Sikshavalli*, 'May Brahmacharins come to me from various directions'. The sage whose meditations have led him to the realisation of his divine nature is not satisfied, until he has also secured disciples to whom he can impart his knowledge, and spread that knowledge through them to different parts of the world. In passing, one may also reflect on the peculiar beauty of this aspect of the Hindu view of Life, that the desire of a teacher for disciples is no less intense than the thirst of the disciples for a *Sat-guru*.

The call of Sri Ramakrishna fell on willing ears. Bengal at that period was in a state of religious and cultural ferment. The political ferment was to come later. The writings of Rammohan Roy, the lectures of Keshub Chandra Sen had disturbed them from their age-long moorings, but at the same time the new ideas which came from the West through English education did not offer a satisfactory answer to their questionings. The message of Sri Ramakrishna with its emphasis on the universal aspect of all religions, and the cult of Bhakti as underlying all forms of approach to God, gave them the satisfying answer. So the youth of Bengal gathered in increasing numbers at the feet of the sage of Dakshineswar. Many renounced their *all* for the privilege of enrolment among his disciples. Sashi Bhushan Chakravarti, the name by which Sri Ramakrishnananda was known before he

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took holy orders, was one of those who answered the call of the Holy Master, at the very young age of twenty years.

Sashi Bhushan Chakravarti was born in an orthodox Hindu Brahmin family in the Hooghly district, in 1863, which was also the year when Swami Vivekananda was born. His father Iswar Chandra was a great devotee of the Divine Mother, and an adept in Tantric scriptures and practices. Under him, Sashi Bhushan got training in the ritualistic aspects of worship, which form a very important feature of Hinduism. This training left a stamp on the mind of Sashi which remained till the end of his life. Sashi went to school, obtained a scholarship and entered the Metropolitan College at Calcutta. He distinguished himself in English, Mathematics, Sanskrit and Philosophy. It was while he was in the B.A. class, that he came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna. He had already dabbled in Brahmo doctrines, but they left him without any satisfaction. His friends told him that there was a Paramahamsa at Dakshineswar about whom Keshub Chandra Sen had written in glowing terms, and one day Sashi and his cousin Sarat visited the Master. The Master received them kindly. There was a discussion, and the Master put a question to Sashi whether he believed in a formless God or God with form. Sashi's frank reply was that as he was not certain of the very existence of God, he was unable to say one way or the other. Sashi who thus entered the Master's presence as a doubter, was to become in later years the most devoted worshipper of Sri Ramakrishna in all forms of symbolic representation; therefore this reply is significant in the context of the future developments in Sashi's life.

The irresistible love of the master drew Sashi as it did so many others, closer and closer to him, until college study was given up, and the bonds that tied him to home and a worldly life were shattered one by one. Sashi at this stage seems to have excelled all other devotees in his intense devotion to the person of the master. Two anecdotes may be given to illustrate this.

The Master was very fond of taking ice during summer. On a sultry day Sashi went on foot from Calcutta to Dakshineswar, and took with him a lump of ice wrapped in paper, and tied in a corner of his upper garment. It was a very hot day, and even at the end of a six miles journey the ice had not melted. Pleased like a child, the master took the ice from Sashi and said, 'It is quite in keeping with your devotion'.

On another occasion when the Master lay ill on a cold night Sashi hardly covering himself left the master's room to clean the commode. On his return he was horrified to find that the master had got up from his bed and was struggling to get a wrapper from a 'clothes horse'. When questioned by Sashi, the master replied, 'I am feeling cold; as you went out almost barebodied on such a cold night, so I am getting a wrapper for you'.

The companionship between Master and disciple lasted for all too short a period. Commencing in 1883 when Sashi was only 20 years old, it came to an end two full years hence when the master passed away in 1886. There are vivid descriptions of the last moments of Sri Ramakrishna. We read in them that it was Sashi who supported the master with his body, when he passed into the final *samadhi* from which there is no turning back.

The disciples were numb with grief. But that stage did not last very long. The master had initiated many of them into holy orders, and had convinced them that the message he had imparted, was of sufficient importance to justify the formation of a new order of brotherhood who had the duty to spread the message far and wide. Bengal recognised the importance of this band of young monks only very slowly. In the meantime, they had to pass through a period of intense poverty and tribulation. They were so poor that they could only get haunted houses to stay; because as

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no one else would live in such houses, they could be had for a low rent. As soon as the master's remains were cremated the ashes were gathered in an urn and kept in a room along with a picture of Sri Ramakrishna. Daily worship was offered there by Sri Ramakrishnananda, with intense devotion and following a pattern of ritual which he had prescribed. The monastery during this period was located first at Baranagore and then at Alambazar. During that period Ramakrishnananda, remained firmly rooted to the monastery adhering to the daily worship and keeping vigil at the master's shrine. The remarkable thing about this phase of the Swamiji's life, was the inspiring way in which he conducted worship. A devotee described it thus : 'His face glowed with inspiration and sincerity. His method of worship was wonderful and charming. One witnessing it spontaneously felt that the worshipper secured the presence of a living person. During *Aratrikam* when he used to wave the light on high repeating in a solemn voice *jai guru, jai guru,* everybody who attended the service was filled with reverence and awe'.

At this time Swami Vivekananda made his trip to America, thanks to the enthusiasm and willing help of certain prominent people in our part of the country. His striking *debut* in the Chicago Parliament of Religions, the impressive way in which in platform after platform in America, he expounded the glories of our ancient religion, and the message of his master, are too well known to require mention here. But this triumphal visit of Vivekananda to America led to three important consequences relevant for our purpose. The welcome which Swami Vivekananda received in America opened the eyes of Indians to the importance of Sri Ramakrishna's message, and the value of the work the mission was doing. Secondly, Vivekananda was so impressed by the work and capacity of Sri Ramakrishnananda that he wanted him to go to America to carry on the work of the mission. But a German homeopathic doctor in Calcutta, Dr Sazer—whose name should be gratefully remembered by us, as his advice saved Ramakrishnananda for the Madras mission—advised the Swami against a trip to America as that would aggravate the eczema trouble to which he was subject. Thirdly, when the citizens of Madras, chief among whom were the well-known Sri V. Krishnaswami Iyer and Sri P. R. Sundara Iyer, approached Swami Vivekananda with a request to establish a monastery at Madras and send a monk to be in charge, Vivekananda replied, 'I shall send you one who is more orthodox than your most orthodox men of the South and who is at the same time unique and unsurpassed in his worship and meditation of God.' As soon as he returned to Calcutta he sent word to Sri Ramakrishnananda saying, 'I have selected you. You are to go to Madras and found a monastery in the name of our beloved Master'.

The Swamiji arrived at Madras in 1897 and the devotees obtained for him a portion of Kernan castle—the place known as Ice House—where Swami Vivekananda had stayed while he was at Madras. He commenced his task of meeting people, holding religious discourses and the daily Puja and worship. The birth days of Guru Maharaj were celebrated in a grand scale and with enthusiasm. His lectures were popular and gathered larger and larger audiences. The *elite* of Madras learned to love him and respect him, and his name became a household word in the city. Many names well known in Madras life, were associated with the Swamiji's work at the period. He organised Vivekananda societies at many centres outside Madras city. He helped to found the R. K. Mission Students' Home in 1905.

Sometime about 1902, an appeal was issued for the acquisition of a site and the construction of a building for the mission. Sri V. Krishnaswami Iyer and other prominent citizens issued this appeal for funds. In 1907 the new building at the Brodies Road site was put up and the Swamiji moved in there. The Swami's activities led him to Bangalore where a Vedantic society was already in existence. The Swami delivered a series of lectures, and

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took part in the collection of funds from door to door for the acquisition of a site and the construction of a building there. A Western disciple, Sister Devamata helped him in his efforts. The building was completed and then the opening ceremony was performed in 1909. Visits attended by religious discourses, to Burma, Bombay and practically every place of importance in South India formed an important feature of the Swamiji's work in this period.

The Swamiji's reputation as a strict disciplinarian, a fervent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, and a master of ritual led to many Brahmacharins being sent to the Mutt at Madras to receive their training under him. Swami Madhavananda, Sharvananda, Paramananda and many others were among those thus trained. These monks have given vivid accounts of the strict, at the same time kindly treatment, given to them by the Swamiji. When Swami Paramananda was sent to Madras by the head of the Order, Swami Brahmananda, the latter told him : 'Stay with Ramakrishnananda for three years and everything will be achieved. Your character will be well-formed. Nothing more will be necessary'. After an incident when he was particularly severe to Swami Sharvananda, the Swami took a mango fruit which he himself had tasted and found sweet, and gave it to Sharvananda. This incident remained fresh in the memory of the latter who many years later recounting the incident said, 'I could feel always that under the stern words and grim face reposed a most loving heart and tender affection even a fond mother could not harbour'.

Many anecdotes have been told by the various friends of the Swami who knew him. Many of the stories reveal his intense devotion to the personality of his Master. On hot nights, he would rush from his room and fan the portrait of his Master at the shrine. When it rained, and there was a leak in the roof, he would hold an umbrella over the portrait of the Master. When he was afflicted with diabetes, and wheat diet was prescribed he would not touch it because his master need not take wheat diet. At a dinner in Travancore he would not partake any portion of a particular dish, because it had not been previously offered to the Master. Following in his Master's footsteps, he would not touch money, and therefore devotees took the trouble of tying the jutka fare in a corner of his dhoti when he had to go to a place of lecture or return.

He showed a catholic understanding of other religions especially of Christianity and Islam of which he had made a deep study. Sri Ramakrishna when he saw the Swamiji on one occasion, remarked that he should have been a follower of Christ in a previous birth. When Ramakrishnananda visited a Church in Madras, his friends were surprised to see him kneel at the altar and offer his devotion. He would never tolerate light-hearted criticisms of great religious leaders like Sankara. On such occasions his reproof was downright and scathing. During his time at Madras, he made a deep study of the writings of the great religious teachers of the south, and wrote in Bengali a life of Sri Ramanujacharya which is a monument to his erudition, and his deep study of the lives of the Vaishnavite saints, and their philosophy.

There were two important visitors to the Mutt during this period. Swami Brahmananda—the most beloved of the Master's disciples who was known as Rakhal and who became the head of the order—and Sri Saradamani Devi—the Holy Mother—undertook the pilgrimage to Rameswaram, and our Swami made elaborate arrangements for the purpose. Realistic accounts are available in the writings about the Swami, of the thoroughness of the arrangements, and the solicitous attention bestowed by the Swami on these distinguished visitors.

Privation, hard-work without any respite, and unceasing journeys, soon took their toll, and even the massive and powerful frame of the Swami was unequal to the tireless demands he made of it in the cause of the service to his Master. Symptoms of phthisis appeared,

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and after a short stay at Bangalore the Swami left for Calcutta in 1910. In spite of the best medical treatment, the disease took a turn for the worse and the end came in August 1911. Shortly before he passed away, one morning, his attendants were surprised to hear him cry, 'Guru Maharaj, the Holy Mother and Swamiji (Vivekananda) have come. Spread a mat for them and three pillows to lean against'. To visitors from Madras he had expressed a desire to spend his last days in the land of the great Acharyas. But this desire was not to be granted and his last remains were cremated on the banks of the Ganges.

Summing up the story of this brief, but crowded life of a dedicated soul, we notice first of all the unique relationship he cultivated towards the personality of his Master. He realised that the mission had to be built round the personality of the Master, who was recognised as an *avatar* by many who had met him and heard his utterances. Therefore, from the moment when the Master passed away, our Swami commenced a regular worship of the Master, and inculcated the ideal of such worship not only on the monks of the order, but on every one who came to the mission for spiritual solace and comfort. Secondly, he realised the value of discipline in religious worship as in everything else that really counts in life. Hence he drew up a carefully prepared ritual for worship, which is followed even today at all places where the picture of the Master is installed in shrines. For the training of Brahmacharins and for their initiation into monkhood, he drew up rules and procedure, and these have set the pattern for the Order to follow. Thirdly, in his personal life he set up a high standard of unselfish service, intense devotion to the Master, and love for fellow disciples—a model for others to follow for all time.

LIFE AND THOUGHT OF SRI SANKARACHARYA

BRAHMACHARI RAMESH CHAITANYA

To understand and properly evaluate the effect of the message of any great man, it is necessary to know the conditions which prevailed before and at the time of his birth. For, as Dr Radhakrishnan puts it, 'Great thinkers appear in all great ages and they are as much the creatures as creators of their era'. When due to passage of time even the best systems get degenerated, when 'the old order changeth yielding place to new, lest one good custom should corrupt the world,' there appear on the scene these world movers who come to fulfil the needs of the time, who come to re-establish Dharma as mentioned in the Bhagavata :

यदा यदेह धर्मस्य क्षयो वृद्धिश्च पाप्मनः ।
तदा तु भगवानीश आत्मानं सृजते हरिः ॥
(IX, 24, 56.)

Whenever Dharma declines and sin increases the Lord manifests Himself.

Right from the Vedic period two distinct thought currents can be seen in our religious history—one advocating Sacrifices etc. and the other demanding moral virtues etc., for attaining *Parama Purushartha,* the highest human objective—spiritual freedom.

The first school is represented by the Karma Kanda of the Vedas where you have statements like स्वर्गकामो यजेत— 'Those who are desirous of heaven should sacrifice'. The Upanishads voice the other school where you have तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व 'Know Brahman by Tapas'. तपो ब्रह्मेति Tapas is Brahman (Taittiriya, III. 2) ; सत्येन लभ्यः तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम्— This Brahman is attainable through increasing practice of truthfulness, austerity, right knowledge and continence. (Mundaka, III. 1-5).

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When human nature revolts against the oppressive rules of formal religions, when mere external observances no longer satisfy, and there is a demand for real spiritual values, a great teacher is born who stimulates and satisfies this urge; one such was Buddha. In spite of his grand teachings, in spite of his preaching mercy to all, including animals, in spite of his sublime ethical religion, Buddhism declined some centuries after Buddha's death leaving in its wake, hideous ceremonies and unmentionable immoral religious practices. Against this tide of degeneration, the Hindu revivalists of the period had started trying to put their house in order. The Mimamsakas under Kumarila Bhatta were trying to re-establish the religion of sacrifice and rituals. A number of Hindu sects like the Saktas, the Ganapatyas and the Bhairavas were wrangling eternally amongst themselves. People weary of all these, were hankering after some kind of harmonising principles with a common basis. In the words of Dr Radhakrishnan:

> The age needed a religious genius who was unwilling to break with the past and yet open to the good influences of the new creeds . . . one who could synthesise the warring sects on the broad basis of truth, which would have room for all men of all grades of intelligence and culture.

At such a critical period of our history, Sankara appeared on the scene and announced his Advaita Vedanta as offering a common basis for the spiritual unification of our people and our culture.

Sankara was born in an orthodox Namboodri family at Kaladi, a village in Kerala, at about 788 A.D. As in the case of all great men of the past, in the traditional story of Sankara's life, fact and fiction mingle to make a mystery of his life filled with miracles, many of which are difficult to believe. But there are quite a few non-controversial incidents which bring out the greatness and majesty of his striking personality. Sankara lost his father in childhood and when he went to school he proved to be a brilliant student learning all that he had to, very quickly. When yet a boy, he desired to renounce the world and become a Sannyasin; but his mother did not agree to it. Knowing that he was the only source of comfort to his widowed mother he did not want to adopt the monastic life without her permission. But she had to yield under peculiar circumstances. The story is told that once when the boy Sankara was bathing in the river which flowed by their house he was caught by a crocodile. Despairing of his life, he called out to his mother who was on the bank to give permission to become a Sannyasin as his end was near. The mother gave the permission; but the crocodile for some mysterious reason left him and he swam ashore. He now prepared to renounce the world; before leaving in search of his Guru he promised her that he would visit her whenever she needed his presence. This promise he kept up when, during her last days, he came to her, nursed her and consoled her. In spite of the opposition of the local orthodox community he performed the last rites of his mother showing the great love he cherished for his mother.

He met his Guru, Govinda on the banks of the Narmada and under him studied for some time. Finishing his studies he went to Banares, the great ancient seat of learning, and started his work as a teacher. Disciples came to him from all parts of the country. It was in Banares that he wrote his famous commentaries on the *Prasthāna Traya,* the Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra. He also wrote a few *Prakarana Granthas* like *Vivekachudamani,* dealing with his Advaita Philosophy, and composed many beautiful, and elevating Hymns full of devotion to God in various aspects like Shiva, Devi, Ganesha and Vishnu. The circumstances which led to the composing of the famous *Bhaja Govinda* stotra are interesting. He was going for his daily bath in the Ganga one morning, when he saw a student committing to memory the root of a verb in Sanskrit. The great Guru spontaneously burst forth into the *Bhaja Govinda* stotra which means, O fool! Worship Go-

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vinda; when death will approach you, this *Dukring-karane* is not going to save you.

Finishing his main literary works he travelled all over India along with his disciple, vanquishing opponents in argument and establishing his philosophy of unity firmly. Mandana Misra, the foremost leader of the Mimamsakas, was one of those he thus defeated. His defeat was also a glorification, for he became the most prominent disciple and exponent of Sankara, by name Sureshwaracharya. He travelled through all the parts of India, purified the Hindu sects and established 4 maths at the four corners of India—at Sringeri in the South, Dwarka in the West, Puri in the East and Joshi Math near Badrinath in the North—as if to signify the religious and cultural unity of this country. He also started 10 orders of monks which exist even today. He died at the young age of 32 at Kedarnath in the Himalayas. In the short span of 32 years he practised several careers, each enough to satisfy an ordinary man. 'He was a philosopher and a poet, a savant and a saint, a mystic and a religious reformer.'

What did the Acharya teach? and what did he achieve? His teaching has been summarised in half a verse ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः— 'Brahman is real, the world is unreal and the individual soul is Brahman Itself and no other'. These three statements require a closer examination. The first one says that Brahman is the one, non-dual reality, eternal and changeless. Sankara describes Brahman as

अनाद्यनन्तोऽजरोऽमरोऽमृतोऽभयः शुद्धः प्रसन्नः
(*Mundaka Bhasya*, I. 2. 1.)

शुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावः सर्वज्ञः (*Ibid.*, III. 1. 1.)

Beginningless, endless, ageless, deathless, immortal, fearless, pure and placid.

By nature eternally pure, wise and free and who is omniscient,

And as

अतःपरं ब्रह्म सदद्वितीयं विशुद्धविज्ञानघनं निरञ्जनम् ।
प्रशान्तमाद्यन्तविहीनमक्रियं निरंतरानन्दरसस्वरूपम् ॥
(*Vivekachudamani*, 237.)

The Supreme Brahman is real, one without a second, pure, the essence of knowledge, the taintless, pacified, devoid of beginning and end, beyond activity and the essence of Bliss Absolute.

This conception of Brahman is supported by the Upanishadic passages like

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म, एकमेवाद्वितीयम् etc.

According to this conception, Reality is the One, non-dual, changeless Brahman; everything other than Brahman is changeful, is *Mithya*; this is brought out by the second part of the statement *Jaganmithya*. The world is unreal, because being changeful, it does not obviously satisfy the criterion for reality mentioned above. This does not mean that the world is absolutely nothing or non-existent; we do see it, experience it. According to Sankara, non-existent things are of the type of a hare's horn or the son of a barren woman which are totally non-existent. The world does not belong to this category. Sankara nowhere describes the world as absolutely unreal. He gives a relative value to the empirical world.

Naturally this question will arise. If the Brahman is the only reality and there is nothing else other than Brahman अन्यद् वस्त्वन्तरं नास्ति then how do we experience the world? The answer Sankara gives is that it is due to Maya, *Avidya* or Ignorance. It is the same Brahman which appears as the world when seen through the prism of *Desa-kala-nimitta*—Time, Space and Causation. Just as a rope is mistaken for a snake, just as a stump of a tree is imagined in darkness to be a policeman by a thief, as the beloved by a lover, as a ghost by a child, it being the same tree all the while, Brahman appears as the world due to ignorance. The world is unreal as it is not what it appears to be. It is *Pratikshanam anyathasvabhavah*; but it appears to be real so long as we are in ignorance. In the Br. Up. Bhasya Sankara says:

न च नामरूपव्यवहारकाले त्वविवेकिनां क्रियाकारकफलादि संव्यवहारो नास्ति इति प्रतिषिध्यते ।...सर्ववादीनामप्यपरिहार्यः परमार्थसंव्यवहारकृतो व्यवहारः
(III. 5.)

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Nor do we deny the validity, for the ignorant, of actions with their factors and results while the relative world of name and form exists. In fact all schools must admit the existence or the non-existence of the phenomenal world accordingly as it is viewed from the relative or absolute standpoint.

The third part of the statement is that the individual soul is no other than Brahman itself; जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापर:— This idea is expressed in the Upanishads by the statements अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, तत्त्वमसि, अयमात्मा ब्रह्म. This stresses the fact that man is intrinsically divine in nature—pure and perfect. He thinks that he is imperfect because of ignorance which is spiritual blindness, and once the ignorance is removed he will realise the truth अहं ब्रह्मास्मि. This removal of ignorance and the realisation of one's ever present divine nature, according to Sankara, is the ideal to be achieved; it is the purpose of all human endeavour. This is the goal of life and the Vedanta designates it as Mukti—Liberation. Sankara says in his *Vivekachudamani* :

लब्ध्वा कथंचिन्नरजन्म दुर्लभं...। यस्त्वात्ममुक्तौ न यतेत मूढधी: स हि आत्महा स्वं विनिहन्त्य सद्ग्रहात् । (4)

The man who having attained the human birth difficult to get, if he is foolish enough not to exert for self-liberation, verily commits suicide, for he kills himself by clinging to things unreal.

आत्मैक्य बोधेन विनापि मुक्तिर्न सिध्यति ब्रह्मशतान्तरेऽपि । (6)

There is no *Mukti* — Spiritual Freedom for anyone without the realisation of one's identity with the Atman, no, nor even in the life time of a 100 Brahmas spent together.

This spiritual oneness of all souls is the basis of all ethics and morality. It is this idea of the divinity of man that will give man the necessary strength to evolve, while facing the various problems of life, into the fulness of a perfect character; and it is this message that the great Swami Vivekananda broadcast to men and women in East and West, and specially to the down-trodden masses of India, so that they, gaining strength from their faith in their inborn divinity, will shake off the delusion that they are weak and realise the true glory of their manhood and womanhood.

Hearing Sankara's definition of the ultimate reality, Brahman, one may think that it is a rigid, motionless, qualityless substance, indifferent to the feelings of its worshippers and that there is no scope either for a Personal God or for His worship in Sankara's Teachings. This is not so. His conception of the Impersonal Brahman includes the Personal God; the Personal God is the highest reading of the Impersonal Absolute conceivable. Sri Ramakrishna explains this with a beautiful simile. Brahman is like the vast ocean, formless and infinite, in which here and there icebergs are formed due to the influence of cold breeze. Similarly due to the cooling influence of the Bhakti of the worshipper, the infinite, formless Brahman becomes condensed into Personal forms of God; and when again, the sun of Jnana rises, these forms melt into the Impersonal. The Personal God of the devotee and Impersonal Absolute of the Philosopher are thus one and the same Being. It was this that enabled Sankara to help the worshippers of the Personal God by composing soul-stirring hymns to Him in His various aspects as Siva, Devi and Vishnu. It is this approach of Sankara that has provided the firm basis for our country for the practice of tolerance and acceptance in the world of religion.

Sankara's philosophy is based on *Sruti*, *Yukti* and *Anubhava* (Revelation, Reason and direct experience). It is this that makes his philosophy not a mere intellectual pursuit, but a way of life dedicated to spiritual realisation, a way in which there is scope for all the types of yogas — Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga. Regarding the place of selfless work in spiritual life, he says in his Gita Bhashya :

ईश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्या अनुष्ठीयमान: सत्त्वशुद्धये भवति फलाभिसन्धिवर्जित: (Introduction.)

When work is done in a spirit of complete dedication to the Lord, without regard to results it conduces to *Sattvasuddhi* — Purity of mind.

कर्मयोगजं फलं परमार्थयोगं (II. 53.)

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man desired to be the many, and so it became the manifold world'; 'After projecting the world, the Brahman entered into it'. The contention of the *Upanishad* is this that the Brahman contemplated upon the design of the manifold universe, and so the universe was projected. From this it is found that the divine desire, evolved out of the mind of the determinate Brahman, caused the manifestation of the universe. The universe should, therefore, be regarded as the construction of the mind or mind-product, and consequently as mind-dependent of the *Hiranyagarbha-Brahman*. Similar views are also maintained by the *Yogavasistha* and the school of Nagarjuna. But the difference between the view of Sankara and those of the *Yogavasistha* and the Madhyamika school lies in the fact that when Sankara, being the upholder of objective idealism, admits the apparent existence of the world-phenomena, the *Yogavasistha* and the nihilistic Madhyamika school absolutely deny the existence of the world independently of the mind, and so they maintain the theory of subjective idealism, resulting in solipsism. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has also admitted the existence of the world so long as nescience or *avidya* exists, but with the revelation of the spark of the Divine illumination of the Brahman, the apparent reality of the world vanishes, which means the world of nescience is sublated by the Brahman knowledge. Such is also the views of Swamis Vivekananda, Abhedananda, and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

According to Vedanta, mind is, in essence, the *cit* or pure consciousness, and but for coming in contact with nescience or *ajnana*, it assumes different names and forms, and feels an urge for projection or *sristi*. The pure consciousness can neither manifest itself, nor project anything by itself. So when there arises the question of projection of the world, pure consciousness must be conceived as to be associated with or contaminated by nescience. The *Prakriti* or *Prajna* is the unmanifested or undifferentiated consciousness, together with the pure *cit*, and when it is manifested, it is known as *Prana* or *antahkarana*. The *Avyakta* or *Prajna* is called *Isvara*, whereas the *Prana* or *antahkarana* is known as *Hiranyagarbha*, the Creator of the universe.

It has been said before that before the projection or manifestation of the world, the universal One contemplated to be the many, and this divine contemplation is the penance or *tapah* on the part of the universal Being. The contemplation or penance is the Divine will or desire, and that will or desire caused the manifestation of the world. The desire, says Sri Aurobindo, is composed of three elements, attachment (*asakti*), longing (*kamana*) and preference (*ragadvesa*). The desire, being the cause of bondage, has been described as an evil force. The desire or *kamana* has been depicted as the personified Mara, in the Buddhist literature. It is said that Mara appeared before Buddha to delude him in various ways. But this idea of Mara is purely of the Vedic origin. It has been mentioned in the *Atharva-Veda* (VI. 93. 1) that *mala* became associated with Yama, the controller of death. In the *Satapatha-Brahmana* (VIII. 4. 2), Mara has been depicted as *papma*, the wicked. Here the word Mara connotes the idea of '*mala*' meaning impurity. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (1. 2. 1), it has been described as '*mrityu*' or death: '*mrityunaivedamavritamasit*'. Again it has been identified with both *arka* (fire) and *asana* (hunger). The English philosopher T. H. Green has called *asana* and *tanha* (*trisna*) as 'hunger' and 'want'.[7] In the Buddhist literature, Mara has again been described as Namuchi. In the *Rig Veda* (X. 131. 4), Namuchi has been described as a demon: '*namuchavasure sacha*'. In Latin, Namuchi appears as Nemesis. Prof. Kern derives the word 'Namuchi' from Mala or Marichi. In the *Sutta-nipata*, Namuchi is

[7] Regarding the teleological principle in will and desire, as maintained by Green, Dr Lamont says: 'But the animal organism is not merely subject to impressions of sense. It is subject to "wants". These wants play the same part in will and desire as sensations play in knowledge. . . . The want is the hunger, the painful body-feeling'—Vide *Introduction to Green's Moral Philosophy* (1934), pp. 39-40.

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known as 'Kanha', i.e. black. In the *Mara-samyutta,* Mara appears as an elephant and a snake to frighten Lord Buddha. Mara has also been described elsewhere as mist or cloud of smoke. In the Greek mythology, cloud has been compared with a snake. In the Vedic literature, cloud has been mentioned as Ahi or snake. In the *Rig Veda,* the snake is known as Ahi. Ahi is again described as a great enemy of Indra, and regular fights between the two happened, resulting in the ultimate victory of Indra. In the Egyptian papyrie, the snake has been depicted as an enemy or demon. The Chinese Dragon is also described as a serpent. The Greeks call it the Typhon. In the Vedas, the snake has been described as the evil spirit, or as the symbol of evil, as it envelops the sun in the sky, in the form of cloud, and brings darkness.[8] The desire or *tanha* (*trisna*) or *vasana* is, therefore, known by various names of evil elements, and it weaves the web of cause and effect that entangles men in delusion or *maya.* When it is stilled, it goes back to its original state, the pure consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna says in the similar way that God cannot be reached by words and thoughts ('*vakya-maner ago-chara*'), but can be reached by the purified mind ('*kintu shuddha maner gochara*'). It means that when the mind is transformed into *cit* or pure consciousness, all its modifications instantly die out, and gets back as it were its own undying glory.

So the constitutive function of the mind is constantly going on, and it is the abiding nature of the mind. It should be transcended, and that means be reduced to its original state. It has already been said that it is, in its essence, the pure consciousness, and in that state it knows no touch of *maya.* Its fall from its original state creates three D's like disequilibrium, discord and diversity, and thereby keeps men chained in the den of nescience. Swami Abhedananda has said in his lecture on the *Way to the Blessed Life* :

> Mind alone makes one act as a slave, and it is also mind which leads one to perfect freedom. When the mind is imperfect and attached to the conditions of phenomenal existence, it keeps the soul in bondage; but when the same mind has been purified, when it has been freed from all delusions, it learns to go below the surface of things and beings, to discriminate the eternal from the non-eternal, the real from the unreal, True life from death, Blessedness from unblessedness, and thus becomes the means of attaining freedom. It makes us realize what is behind mind, and brings the ego back to the centre of Truth from which it proceeded.

Therefore we must get behind the mind and its functions, and realize the *Atman* that shines at the background of the mind, and whenever we shall realize it, then and then alone we shall make ourselves free from the fetters of false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*) and get the absolute Freedom, even in this life.

[8] Vide Dr Har Dayal : The *Boddhisvatta Doctrine in Buddhist Literature* (1932), pp. 306-316.

TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

NANOOBHAI DAVE

Him I ask.
Would you think thus,
And do this and that?

Even little as I know Him,
He answers,
He warns,

He guides
As a parent would do to a child;
In help, so generous.
And so near, in affection too.

Therefore, I bow to him
He warns,

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KSHETRA, YOGA AND VIBHUTI

(The exact meaning of the terms in the Gita.)

V. B. ATHAVALE

From the Bhandarkar Edition of the Mahabharata, it is easy to prove that the Gita dialogue was composed by Maharshi Vyasa — Krishna Dwaipayana — and it was included as one of the Parvas in the 100 Parvas of Jaya history originally composed by him and later expanded into Bharata and Mahabharata by Vaishampayana and Sauti respectively, who were the contemporaries of the king Janamejaya and Adhisamakrishna, the 4th and 7th descendants of the Pandavas. For Adi. 2. 70 tells that Krishna Vyasa wrote the original Jaya history in 100 Parvas, which was retold by Sauti to Shaunaka in Naimisharanya as Mahabharata in 18 Parvas only. Adi 2. 54-65 tell that 63rd Parva was 'Bhagvad-Gita', 64th was Bhishma-patana, 86th was Raja-dharma, 88th was Moksha-dharma, 90th was Swarga-arohana of Bhishma and 92nd was Anu-gita.

Anu-gita is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna which is supposed to have taken place at Indra-prastha and Vyasa has referred to the earlier dialogue on the battle field, in Anu-gita. The 86th and 88th Parvas are the dialogues between Bhishma and Yudhishthira near the arrow-bed of Bhishma. Both Krishna Vyasa and Krishna Vasudeva were present during this dialogue. In the Shanti-Parva, which is 12th in the narration of Sauti, Gita is referred to as 'Hari Gita' twice by Vaishampayana in Ch. 346. 52 and Ch. 348. 9. In Adi. 56. 19-26 and Swar. 5. 38-42, Sauti calls the Jaya history of Vyasa as 'Karshna-Veda' written for extolling the victory of the Pandavas. In Adi. 1. 191-97, Sauti refers to Gita as a Upanishad composed by Krishna Dwaipayana to extol Krishna Vasudeva as Para-Brahma, Paramatma or Purushottama or Vishnu Vasudeva, one of the 8 sons of Aditi in the Vedas. From the historical account of the Sabha-Parva, it is easy to show that Krishna Vasudeva was actually worshipped as Purushottama because Bhishma had proposed that Krishna deserved to be chosen as the best man for worship as Purushottama in the Vedic ritual of Rajasuya Yajna.

Udyoga 72. 32-47 tells that Yudhisthira had a discussion with Krishna about the duties of a Kshatriya and these are practically the same as those raised by Arjuna in the 1st chapter of the Gita.

Papah kshatriya dharmoyam, vayam cha kshatra bandhavah
vayam vadhena jivamah, kapalam brahmanaih vritam.

Ch. 73. 3-4 tells

jayo vadho va sangrame, dhatra-dishta sanatanah
ahuh ashraminah sarve na bhaikshyam kshatriyah charet
Swadharmah kshatriyasyaeshah karpanyam na parashasyate.

In Gita 2. 7 Arjuna also says

karpanyadoshopahatah swabhavah dharmasanmudhachetah.

Shanti 37 tells that Yudhisthira asked Vyasa many questions about 'kshatriya dharma' and Vyasa said that Bhishma had studied all these questions and he would be able to give a satisfactory reply to all such queries. Krishna Vasudeva also insisted that this knowledge about Dharma can be preserved only by a discussion with him. Vyasa, who was present during the dialogue, has merely summarised this 'Raja Dharma and Moksha Dharma' discussion in the Gita dialogue because Krishna had compelled Yudhisthira to approach for preserving this knowledge.

We have seen that Vyasa wrote the Jaya history to extol the victory of the Pandavas. It is confirmed by Bhishma 2. 8-13 and it adds

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that Vyasa had sent Sanjaya to the battle field to report correctly the incidents in the war.

It is thus necessary to look at the 700 verses in Gita, as an art of the author Krishna Vyasa in presenting the subject matter taken for discussion in the dialogue and ignore Vasudeva and Arjuna. At present there is a long colophone at the end of each of the 18 chapters. '*Brahmavidyayam yogashastre Krishnarjuna samvade—yogonama*'. It is easy to show that the long title was introduced by some one later when the Gita-Parva was separated from the original 100 Parvas. There are three chapters in the Gita (1st, 16th and 17th) which do not contain the word 'yoga' even once. It is thus impossible to maintain that these chapters deal with a particular aspect of yoga. In the 1st chapter Krishna Vasudeva has only uttered *Partha pashya etan samavetan Kurun*. It would be absurd to name the chapter as 'Arjuna-vishada yoga'. The same thing is true for 16th and 17th chapters. Bhandarkar Institute has some old manuscripts of Gita which end as '*Harigitasu prathamodhyayah*—'.

We shall now try to find out the technical name given by Vyasa to this composition as well as the nature of the general topics of the dialogue from the text, ignoring the words in the colophone. G. 18.20 calls the whole dialogue *Dharmyam samvadam*, G. 15. 20 calls *guhyatamam shastram idam* and G. 11. 1 gives the technical name of this most sacred shastra as *adhyatma samjnitam paramam guhyam*. G. 18. 75 *Vyasa prasadat shrutvan etat guhyam aham param* confirms the historical fact that Sanjaya was sent by Vyasa to report war. The common individual name Krishna of Krishna Vasudeva, the speaker and Krishna Vyasa the author, has been skillfully utilised to indicate the name of the composer of this Adhyatma shastra by bringing together in G. 10. 37 *vrishninam Vasudevah* and *muninam apyaham Vyasah*. G. 16. 23-24 and G. 17.1 use the expressions 'shastravidhi' and 'shastra vidhana'.

The word 'shastra' means a methodical presentation of the subject matter by giving all the definitions of the technical terms in the text in a self-sufficient and consistent manner. The terms 'vidhi' and 'vidhana' mean the specific rules of behaviour in confusing situations and conflicting circumstances.

The first word in Gita is 'Dharma-kshetre'. G. 13. 1 equates 'kshetra' with 'sharira', which means the physical body. Deha, Tanu, Purusha, Kalevara and Preta are the other five words to indicate the same meaning. The Sanskrit language is noted for its brevity and laconic expressions. There are few basic roots like Kr, Jna, Bhu, Asa, Smr, and all other ideas are derived from these basic roots. Just as in the scientific measurements we have only three fundamental units of length, time and mass and all others are derived from a combination of these three, similarly all other ideas are obtained as derivatives from these basic root words. As spoken words are the only means by which we can bring out our ideas and thoughts, there must be some definite relation between the word and the thought. Thus one word may express many thoughts or different words may be necessary to indicate the different shades of the same meaning. The single letter 'na' expresses six different ideas, similarity, differences, non-existence, a small portion, opposite, improper. For instance, if the word 'jna' means knowledge, 'ajna' may mean any of the six varieties depending on the context.

KSHETRA

Gita uses 7 words (Kshetra, Sharira, Deha, Tanu, Purusha, Kalevara and Preta) to indicate the same physical body. We shall see how Gita has defined each word to indicate a different shade. Let us take the word 'Sharira'—*shiryate iti shariram* (that which deteriorates) being the root meaning, no definition is given. But G. 13.8 (janma mrtyu jara vyadhi duhkha dosha) tells the process by which the physical body degenerates from birth to death. G. 13.11 adds that to know this is Jnana but to forget these facts and to assume the body to be permanent is 'ajnana'. G. 13.3 defines 'kshetra' as 'yat vikari

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yatascha yat'. The word 'vikari' indicates the metabolic changes in the body as given above, but the words 'yatah ca yat' indicate the reproductive capacity of a living body. Thus 'sharira' means a living body which differentiates it from 'kalevara' or 'preta' which mean a body from which life is extinct. G. 13.26 tells that the word 'kshetra' includes all the living bodies of both the animal and vegetable kingdom. The word 'deha' is defined in G. 5. 13 as 'navadwara-pura'. It includes all vertebrate animals having nine exits (2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostrils, mouth, urinary opening and anus). G. 9.11 tells that 'tanu' is a human body.

G. 15. 16 says :

Dwau imau purushau loke, ksharah cha aksharah eva ca
Ksharah sarvani bhutani kutastho akshara uchyate.

The word Purusha occurs in Gita ten times (G. 2/15, 21, 60, 62, 71 ; G. 3/4, 19, 36 ; G. 7/8 ; G. 8/4 ; G. 13. 19-21 ; G. 17/3 ; G. 18/25). It means the physical human body *plus* the personality working inside the external body. In the verse quoted above 'kshara purusha' means the external perishable part in this Nr or Manushya-loka. The central problem of Gita is to decide the condition of the 'akshara purusha' after the death of the physical body.

The words 'Kshetra' and 'Kshetrajnya' in the 13th chapter are thus very significant for the clear analysis of this central problem. G. 13.5-6 tell that the word Kshetra means internal subtle portions like mind, buddhi, citta, dhrti, ahamkara etc. The figurative meaning of the word Kshetra is the soil which will grow delicious or poisonous fruits according to the nature of the seed sown in it.

The word 'kr' becomes 'karma' or 'kriya'. The acts of the physical body are called 'kriyah', while functions of the mind, intellect etc., are called 'karma'. The word 'jna' gets associated with 'kshetra' in two ways, 'kshetra-jnanam' and 'kshetrajna-jnanam'. G. 13.31, 33 identifies 'kshetri' or 'kshetrajna' with 'paramatman' or 'para-purusha' or 'maheshwarah' 'purushottama' (G. 8.8; 8.10; 5.29; 10.12; 13.22; 15.18). Gita maintains that 'kshetri' can be known through Jnanacakshu only and the 'akshara-purusha' with his shraddha cover has got the capacity to develop this Jnana-cakshu.

G. 18.12-15 tell explicitly that the acts and functions of a human being bear fruit after the death of the physical body and the fruit may be good or bad according as the acts are just or unjust. To distinguish between the karma which bears fruit here and the karma which bears fruit hereafter, Gita divides acts under 3 sections : Shariram, Vangmayam, manasam. As mind etc., form the subtle body which survives after death, it is clear that the acts of the mind determine the future of the Jiva (embodied soul after death). G. 13.21 tells that the tendencies of the Purusha (puri shete) to enjoy the 'gunas'—*gunan deha samudbhavan*—in the 'prakriti', make it incumbent on the 'purusha' to take birth to enjoy the good or bad fruits of his past actions. If the Jiva uses his power of knowledge to understand Paramatman he gets merged in 'kshetri' and is ever free from the cycle of births and deaths, like the 'kshetri'.

YOGA

We can now take up the analysis of the word 'yoga' in Gita by studying the definitions of the word in the text and not the meanings given in the dictionary ; 1. Yuja—Samadhau ; 2. Yunja—to join ; 3. Yuja—Sanyamah. As a noun it occurs 101 times in the text. There are three definitions of the word. 1. *samatvam yoga ucyate* ; 2. *Karmasu kaushalam yogah* (G. 2. 48 and 2. 50)

3. *Yatra uparamate cittam niruddham yogasevaya*
yasmin sthite na duhkhena gurunapi vichalyate
tam yoga samjnitam (G. 6.20-23).

As the third definition is merely a magnified form of the first, there are only two separate

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definitions of the word 'yoga'. But as the word recurs 101 times, it would be extremely difficult to decide which definition is to be applied in each case and why. But the problem becomes simplified if we classify the word in the nominative, accusitive, instrumental, dative, ablative, possessive and locative uses.

'Yoge' (2.39) is the only locative singular, and the plural is absent. 'Yogasya' (6.44) is the only possessive singular, the plural is absent. 'Yogat' (6.37) is the only ablative singular, the plural is absent. 'Yogaya' (2.50) is the only dative singular, the plural is absent. 'Yogaih' (5.5) is the only instrumental plural. The nominative and accusative plurals are entirely absent. The instrumental plural shows clearly that *Yogah karmasu kaushalam* definition is for the instrumental case because the processes for attaining the 'Samatva' are many. The definition 'samatvam yoga' is for nom. and accu. singulars because it indicates one and only one unique state. G. 2. 53 *yada sthasyati niscala samadhau acala buddhih, tad yogam avapsyasi* tells explicitly that Samatva is identical with Samadhi. G. 6. 33 says *Yo yogah samyena proktah.*

The words mana, dhriti, citta and buddhi are only associated with samatva in Gita —G. 5. 19-20

yesham samye sthitam manah
nirdosham hi samam brahma tasmat
brahmani te sthitah
brahmavit brahmani sthitah.

It is clearly a 'brahmisthiti' which is summarised in G. 2. 72 :

esha brahmi sthiti partha nainam prapya
vimuhyati
sthitvasyam antakalepi brahmanirvanam
rcchati

Two definitions of 'yoga' are necessary because the word indicates both the state and the ways by which the state can be achieved.

VIBHUTI

Now we can turn to the word 'vibhuti'. The whole of the 10th chapter is devoted to this discussion. The 7th and 9th chapters do mention some 'vibhutis'. The 1st verse of the 10th chapter tells that the earlier topic is being discussed again. G. 10.4-5 enumerates twenty words and they are called *bhutanam bhavah.* The verse 7th calls these 'bhavah' as 'vibhuti'. Verses 16, 18, 19 call them 'atma-vibhutayah'. In the 17th verse, Arjuna asks the question, 'in which of the bhavas I should constantly think about you?' The necessity for the question arose from the fact that in G. 2.62-63 Krishna had warned him not to meditate on the objective pleasures of the senses, because it will lead to the ruin of the intellect. Our senses can understand the 'bhutas' which means 'created matter' and it is to die soon. G. 8. 4 tells *adhibhutam ksharo bhavo,* but *bhutanam bhavah* are *atma-vibhutayah,* i.e., the manifestation of the atman through the 'bhutah'. They are not 'kshara'. Hence, the meditation of the 'bhavas' can be a stepping stone to the realisation of the 'atman' which is beyond the Buddhi—G. 3. 42 *yo buddheh paratastu sah.*

When the power of consciousness, which appears through the mind as memory, as passionate fondness through citta and as determinative faculty through the intellect, gets associated with the perishable body, the power is wasted. But if they are turned to the 'Atman' or 'Kshetri' from which they arise, they get conserved and then the human body is called 'dharma-kshetra' or 'daivi-sampat'. Otherwise, it is 'Adharma-kshetra' or 'Asuri-sampat'. Hence, the first question of Arjuna was about the 'shreya' for him because he was *dharma sammudha chetah.*

Gita indicates an intrinsic difference between 'Gunah and Bhavah' because their sources are different. G. 7.12 has 'the bhavah are from the Atman', G. 14.20 'the Gunah' are from the body. G. 10. 4-5 gives 20 'bhavah' as 'atmavibhutayah'. G. 10. 6 gives *manasa jata madbhava* as Atmano-yogam. G. 10. 11

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equates it with Atmabhava. G. 7.24 and 9.11 equate it with Parambhava which is superior to vibhuti also.

With regard to the idea of 'Vibhuti' (manifestation of the Atman through the created world) introduced by Vyasa in the 10th chapter of the Gita, it is interesting to note that Vyasa has included the names of some important personalities (historical) mentioned in the ancient Vedic literature like Vishnu, the son of Aditi, Brihaspati Angirasa among the priests, Pralhada, the son of Diti along with his own name (*Muninam aham Vyasah*) and the names of Krishna and Arjuna also. (*Vrishninam Vasudevah, Pandavanam Dhananjayah*). This idea has been skilfully used by him to propagate his new theory of 'Avatara' in the 4th chapter :

Paritranaya sadhunam, vinashaya ca dushkritam
dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge.

Paramatman manifests himself through human bodies for this sacred cause. It is suggested that Krishna was an 'Avatara' of Vishnu, who is extolled in Rigveda *Ato dharmani dharayan Vishnoh karmani pashyata.* The idea of Avatara is absent in the vedic literature prior to Vyasa.

GURU RAM DAS

(*The Dealer in Gram turns Dealer in 'Ram'*)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Solidarity and proof of true greatness lies in humility, a rare virtue in man who prides in his great littleness. When Baba Sri Chand, the Udasi son of Guru Nanak, once asked Bhai Jetha why he kept so long and flowing a beard, the latter replied in his characteristic simplicity, 'To wipe the dust of your feet'. Not vain words said. For they symbolised the real pith of his being. One glimpse of Guru Amar Das, the Third Nanak, was enough for this young boy to put his soul and body at the service of the Guru, when he first came to see him at Goindwal. Jetha dedicated himself to the Guru with full faith and surrender. This spirit of humble service and devotion was enough to win for him not only the kindness of the Guru but also the hand of his beloved daughter. And the gift for which he would 'pray humbly' was 'to be led towards the Divine Guru' and the 'light of the Name'.

'O Lord Beloved, O Guru, flame
My being with Lord Rama's Name;
My seeking is but one: the feet
Of refuge of the Guru True;
My yearning with thy kindness meet,
With light of the Name my being hue.
Be Guru's Name my one life-friend
And Hari's songs my treasure's fund.'

Test of true service is hard and the only thing that stands in good stead is humility. Bhai Jetha's father-in-law asked his Sikhs to raise a dais for his seat. It was not a difficult task, for it was soon carried out. But it was a difficult test. The work did not meet with the Guru's liking. It had to be demolished and rebuilt, not only once but times without number. Patience is not given to all; only the true gold will give its glitter in the trial of the crucible. The attempt had to be abandoned, for none could satisfy the deeper meaning of the Guru, for none understood.

What humility, what candidness!

'I would in humble and complete
Submission fall at Guru's Feet;
For he alone can make me meet
My Lord by his compassion sweet.'

'No man the Lord Divine can find
By obstinacy of his mind,
Many devices men have tried
And tired themselves unsatisfied.

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By scores of wisdom-ways pursued
This bare-blank mind cannot be hued.
The Lord no man can hope to meet
By means of falsehood and deceit.
Whatever seed the man shall sow,
Of that he shall the harvest grow.'

Bhai Jetha stuck to his spirit. He was not to be tired. He went on moulding his spirit of service, patience, humility, devotion and faithfulness into a form that might ultimately be worthy of acceptance by the lord of his self. 'How long will you go on like this?' asked the Guru. 'Till the work meets with your satisfaction', was his reply.

Service and humility were the warp and woof of Bhai Jetha's texture which spread in endless self-giving. He was destined to carry the grace of Guru and God in wide expansion and protect, as the next Guru, the growing race that was to stand the challenge of a great tyrannic empire. He was to keep secure and revivify the spiritual heritage of a people that had become almost spiritless, weak and slothful, forgetful of the great spirit of Dharma, which, said Guru Nanak, is

'. . . . . Compassion's son,
Pervaded by Contentment's soul
Which keeps all knit in ordered whole.'

The warrior-soul of the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, later invoked the Divine Power so that:

'In corners and nooks of the whole world, be current the tale of the Dharma!'

Jetha, who as a small boy sold grains had now as his commodity 'the light of the Name', and wealth of Hari's Name:

'Hari is the treasure of jewel and gem,
Hari alone the emerald,
Thy heart all Guru-ward impelled,
O mint the coin of Hari's Name.'

'In the Name of Ram and Hari lies
My whole life's wealth and merchandise.'

The price he demanded was humility, love, dedication, detachment and faith. He said:

'The servitors of Hari are
Forever highly fortunate
In their unflinching faith and great
Thirst for the Lord that they inbear.'

And is it not that as their need,

'Thou hast been down the ages keeping
Thy servitors, full of their need,
On them, O Lord, O Wonder, heaping
Thy bounties. 'Tis Thy Grace indeed.'

Guru Ram Das wanted his relation with 'Ram', the Divine, entire and inseparable:

'Hari alone my life and friend
And he alone my being's Lord;
O let my body and my mind
Be bound to Him with own-ness cord.'

As Guru, his service for Waheguru, the Divine Wonderful, took the form of service of His servitors. He was ordained to lay the foundation of a place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs, a centre of their growing nation. Ramdaspur soon became for them a city of flourishing trade and a religious centre. Later it came to be called Amritsar, 'The Lake of Nectar' which surrounded the new Gurudwara where Guru Arjun, the next Nanak, installed the First Copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, compiled by him with great labour of love.

For him none was great or small, rich or poor, high or low. All took their food in the 'Common Kitchen' which was free from all social discriminations. All were equal to him for within everything animate or inanimate dwelt the Lord:

'The Lord Beloved has created
Himself the whole widespread creation
And He Himself has penetrated
All things and therein taken station.'

'Wherever I lift up my eyes
There Thee and Thee alone I view,
O Lord Omniscient, dwellest Thou
In mould of every shape and size.

Same is the breath and same the clay,
Same light in everyone doth stay.'

His hand was free in giving and his heart was full of faith. For he knew, as says Barbara Leslie Jordan:

'Hands that are withheld
Never can receive,
Those who live with doubt
Never can believe.'

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Although he found that

'Rare are the men, whose life is stirred
By Guru's Wisdom-way and word,'

yet he knew categorically that

'All beings' hope but in Thee dwell'th
Thine are all creatures, thou their wealth.
There is, O Lord, no single spot
In world where Thou abidest not.'

That is why he says :

'Hurrah and glory great for those
Who are to Guru turned and close.'

His prayer is eternal to the Divine and his compassion for His children immeasurable :

'From drowning in the waters dark
Of venemous ignorance and dread,
Says Nanak, save Thy men; O hark
The prayers by Thy servants said.'

THE PRAGMATIC REACTION TO PLATONISM

G. SRINIVASAN

John Dewey is one of the chief exponents of pragmatism in recent years. Dewey's pragmatism is also known as Instrumentalism. His criticism of platonism centres round the two-fold platonic distinction of the two orders of Being—the transcendent and the empirical, as corresponding to the two orders of knowing or organs of knowledge—Reason and sense-experience.

The pragmatist denies the existence of the 'transcendent' as well as its knowability; he shares this criticism with the Skeptic and the Agnostic. But, more significant and basic is his disagreement with the Skeptic and the the Agnostic : The Skeptic and the Agnostic *assume* as much as the platonist that the mission of philosophy is to expound the nature of the Ultimate Reality, and then set forth to point out that any philosophical attempt should *necessarily* fall short of fulfilling this self-assigned mission. The pragmatist, on the other hand, questions this very assumption and emphasises the need for its repudiation. He aims at a 'reconstruction in philosophy',[1] which means for him, a change of purpose as well as the method of philosophical enquiry : The result is a *new kind* of philosophy basically different from platonism. Between pragmatism and platonism there is no common platform, and the pragmatist is not a 'brother metaphysician'[2]—like the Skeptic or the Agnostic—who agrees with the platonist regarding the purpose of philosophy but either doubts or denies the possibility of its fulfilment.

The new purpose of philosophy set up by pragmatism, is the rationalisation of the possibilities of existent collective human experience so as to serve as guides to subsequent experience, and as ideals to be realised in it. The substitution of this pragmatic purpose to the platonic purpose of contemplating the nature of Ultimate Reality means in other words, a change in the nature of philosophy from 'contemplative' to 'operative', and in the light of the pragmatic purpose of philosophy, many philosophical concepts such as Real and Ideal, Experience and Reason, shed their original platonic meaning, and come to acquire a new meaning :

1. For the pragmatist, the 'Real' means not a 'noumenon' or 'thing-in-itself' demanding for its comprehension a 'higher' organ of knowledge than what is ordinarily found in man; but only the actual world of human experience, accessible to one and all through the human modes of apprehension; it is the total environment with which the organism is in constant interaction; experience arises out of this interaction between the organism and

[1] John Dewey : Reconstruction in Philosophy. Mentor Book. 1951. (Second printing.)

[2] F. H. Bradley : Appearance and Reality. Macmillan, N.Y. 1906.

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its environment. Moreover, the pragmatist maintains that the 'Real' conceived as the actual world of experience, has nothing derogatory about it, so as to be condemned *en bloc* as illusory from a (non-existent) transcendent standpoint.

Similarly, for the pragmatist, the 'Ideal' does not mean a realm of self-existent, self-sufficient, changeless and transcendent Reality uncontaminated by anything 'empirical' or mundane. The pragmatist contends that such a transcendent realm, if postulated, would only be an asylum into which the philosopher seeks refuge from the troubles of the actual world of experience, and this refuge is sought through his 'wishful thinking' which hypostatises the human aspirations or the 'possibilities' of human experience into 'transcendent' existents. The pragmatist believes that the Ideals are only possibilities of existent collective human experience, projected out of it so as to serve as guides to subsequent experience and be realised in it. The 'Ideals' conceived as 'possibilities' of experience are not self-sufficient and static but change in response to the ever-created fresh demands of collective human experience.

Thus, the pragmatic view of the relation of the Ideal to the Real conceived as the relation of the 'possibility' to the 'actuality', marks it off from platonism which—as believed by the pragmatist—hypostatises or ontologizes the possibilities into a metaphysical order of Reality and from that standpoint seeks to condemn the actual world of experience, either as wholly illusory or as *relatively* real.

2. For the pragmatist, 'Experience' has nothing mysterious about it; it implies no mystic absorption in the pure contemplation of the Ultimate Reality or the Ideals. Experience arises out of the interaction between the organism and its environment, and as such implies on the part of the organism its 'doing and suffering'. Experience, inasmuch as it implies both 'doing and suffering' means a continuous growth which at every stage of its development affects the organism to which it belongs and is in return, modified or improved by it. Experience is not passive reception of meaning on the part of an organism but an 'intelligently conducted doing', an act of enquiry terminating in knowledge. Knowledge develops in and through experience, and is derived from it. Knowledge is not *sui generis* (as believed in platonism) but is organically connected with the growing human experience. Knowledge is in this sense, neither purely 'empirical' (passive reception of meaning), nor purely rational (logical deduction of necessary truths from self-evident propositions) but is 'experimental' in nature. That is, it is essentially a process of learning by trial and error, and consists of a series of experiments conducted by the organism in its attempt to arrive at a better self-adjustment with the environment or the existent world of experience. Sensations are not parts of knowledge (as the empiricist believes), but challenges to an act of enquiry, which provoke and incite the organism for a better re-adaptation of its behaviour to the environment. Every new adaptation brings with it new knowledge derived through experimentation. The 'spectator' view of knowledge comes to be thus substituted by the 'experimental' view of knowledge in pragmatism.

Reason is not any 'higher' organ of knowledge, exclusively devoted to the comprehension of the Ultimate Reality, as the platonists believe; nor is it a 'faculty' entirely other than sense-experience, responsible for introducing order, regularity and connections in an otherwise chaotic sense-experience, as Kant seems to believe. Reason, for the pragmatist, means nothing other than human intelligence ever engaged in bringing about better adaptation of the organism to the changing environment; Intelligence works in and through experience which includes within it the conditions or the principles of its regularity and order. Experience is thus self-regulative and need not wait for the order and regularity to be bestowed on it by any alien faculty.

In this reaction to platonism, the pragmatist, thus, restricts the human capacity for

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knowledge to mere sense-thinking, and confines all Reality to mere empirical existence. This two-fold pragmatic limitation of human personality and Reality stands in clear contrast to the two-fold platonic distinction of Reason and Sense-experience as corresponding to the distinction of the 'transcendent' and the 'empirical'. The pragmatic limitation of human personality and Reality rules out the possibility of any 'metaphysics' which claims to investigate into the nature of the 'transcendent' or Ultimate Reality, through a superior organ of knowledge of which it believes to be in possession. If pragmatism is the 'true' philosophy, then 'metaphysics' in the traditional or platonic sense turns out to be a pseudo-philosophy, a concocted system of hallucinations. Pragmatism and platonism are thus mutually exclusive opposites and the truth of the one implies the falsity of the other. The opposition between pragmatism and platonism is more fundamental and conspicuous than between platonism and Skepticism or Agnosticism, since the pragmatist unlike the Skeptic or the Agnostic, denies to the metaphysical theories even the status of legitimate philosophical problems.

Any system of philosophy is the outcome of a felt inner need, and the traditional or platonic metaphysics is no exception to this rule. The inner need that necessitated the systems of traditional metaphysics or platonism, was the need for liberation or freedom from empirical existence. Any 'freedom-seeking' philosophy hence bears the stamp of platonism, in as much as it postulates a transcendent Reality, and credits man with the capacity for acquiring a superior organ of knowledge (Ratio or Intellectus) which intuitively comprehends the transcendent Reality and thereby qualifies the human personality for a trans-empirical status or immortality or freedom. The 'transcendent' Reality is not a hypostatisation nor is the actual world of experience merely 'illusory'. The 'transcendent' Reality is an 'intuitive certainty', and the reality of the empirical world consists in its being derived from the truth of the 'transcendent' Reality: The empirical existence possesses philosophical significance, in as much as it 'suggests'[3] to the mind its own ground of explanation, the 'transcendent' Reality in which it 'participates'[4] for its own existence or reality. The empirical existence is not self-explanatory, and its explanation lies beyond itself in a 'transcendent' Reality which must be intuitively comprehended as the ground of empirical existence. To know the One 'transcendent' Reality, is to know the 'Many' that follow from it as its consequents or emanations. Traditional metaphysics or platonism is thus 'deductive' and 'intuitive' in its method, not 'inductive' and 'experimental' like pragmatism. Knowledge of the Supreme or 'transcendent' Reality enables the knower completely to control and instrumentalise his own empirical consciousness or being, whereby he attains a transempirical status or immortality.

Traditional metaphysics being thus the outcome of a felt inner need for liberation, there is no reason why it should appear sensible and satisfactory in the absence of such a need. Besides, it is no wonder that the need for liberation or freedom from empirical existence should strike the pragmatist as remote and ridiculous because of his mental engrossment in the 'empirical'. Pragmatism and platonism, in fact, express two distinct human tendencies and suit men of two different temperaments: What has a special attraction for the one will be a matter of aversion for the other.

[3] Plato: Phaedo.
[4] Plato: Republic.

The test, then, of a theory, of a belief, of a doctrine, must be its effect on us, its practical consequences. This is the *pragmatic* test. . . . 'On pragmatic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily, in the widest sense of the word, it is true.'

— FRANK THILLY (*A History of Philosophy*, p. 567.)

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THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASPECT IN ORIYA LITERATURE

GOPAL CHANDRA MISHRA

Ancient Oriya literature is characteristically religious and thus is composed of mainly religious poetry. The essential spirit pervading the literary area is that of one catholic in outlook and cosmopolitan in attitude.

Bhim Bhoi, a saintly poet and religious preacher of the 19th century wrote the following which sounds as the most representative and all-embracing of all literary essences. The English translation of the lines runs as :

> 'I mind not being in hell for ever if thereby the world is saved.'

There can be nothing more universal in appeal of human conscience than this and there can be nothing more of devotion, sacrifice and piety than that is contained in these noble utterances of the Oriya poet. The entire record of Oriya literature may be summed up as 'Be bold and free the truth, be one with truth.' The illustrious poets of ancient period have all stood for the triumph of truth, justice and virtue over falsehood, injustice and all that is evil. The shining chapters of the distinguished literary souls are full of condemnation of sins and sinners against a background morally developed and spiritually fostered. There is all along a search for forces fostering unity, amity at large. The perennial source of Oriya lyrics is emotion and faith in some supreme power. The spring of all noble ideas is this divine spirit and the mystic poets are distinguishedly susceptible to them.

Great religious souls are born for reinstating the religion. With the passing of time great teachers have appeared and have promulgated their views ordered by God Himself. Through mystic realisation they are attuned to Him and He becomes real to them.

A close study of Oriya literature from the beginning to the present times reveal a unique feature, that is the combination of fanciful imaginations of the poets with that of the spiritual longings of the human hearts. The history of the gradual development of Oriya literature is divided into five ages, each characterised by introduction of new ideas, faiths and beliefs. First of all the age of Sarala Das and Pancha Sakhas represented the religious and ecclesiastical awakening, the second phase revolving upon the eternal theme of Rama and Krishna, at third and fourth stages the poets conformed to the idea of liberation of souls amidst suffering, while at the fifth stage the poets and writers composed lyrics guided not only by the impulse but also by the idea. Besides this growth and development of trends and tendencies in usual way one remarkable characteristic with most of the poets of Orissa is their unflinching and implicit faith in Lord Jaganath, the most celebrated and presiding deity of this ancient land of art and architecture. Saints, reformers and religious preachers from all over India have visited this land of piety and art and writers interpreted and preached their beliefs. Any fresh religious belief, thought or theory is interpreted in terms of what may be called Jaganathism. The Lord Jaganath is described, interpreted and maintained as the Primary source of all incarnations defined in the ancient puranas. Oriya literature is replete with references to the Lord Jaganath and thus a major portion of our literary heritage show evidences of it. Great devotees like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, and many others have all visited Orissa from different parts of India and surrendered at this mighty Pitha of Jagannath, forgetting their individual greatness. Literature of Orissa, though meagre in bulk in those days, bears testimony to this fact. Siddhas of ancient Utkal have candidly revealed this with all ethical excellence. Orissa, as a matter of fact, has in different periods, come under

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the influence of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism etc., in different times and in her critical periods of test, had got to cling to the combined way of two or more of these, as the unavoidable circumstances could forcibly drag her down to such changes as were felt congenial to her manifold uplift and spiritual excellence. The Gajapati of Orissa along with other ruling chiefs and chieftains had to patronise a particular cult or cults that prevailed significantly for a particular period. Pandits, courtpoets and poets moving in the society had to approve the same in right earnest but had to consider the pros and cons of a new change before they had to accept it. These social changes formed the background of Oriyan literature growing gradually through changes in view of subject matter, style and diction, ideas and sentiments, metre and other technical phenomena as well. Our 'Bauddhagana O Duha' the marvellous piece of Siddha-literature does rightly breathe the spirit of such essentials as should make life sacred, devoted, truth-loving, dutiful and sacrificing.

Long before the 5th century B.C., Brahmanism, in close conformity with the cult of Vedanta, had its sway on Orissa and her literature produced in palmleaf-manuscripts in the Brahmi script. These manuscripts are no longer available any where but justifications are many to this effect when one reads the copper plates, few of which are available till now. But in the 3rd century B.C., when Orissa was conquered by Asoka, the Great Buddhist Emperor, Buddhism had its automatic sway and had to continue for a number of centuries even after the Christian era. The doctrines of this religion with all their essential aims and excellence are very clear from the stone inscriptions that so vitally draw the attention of historians. But literature in this direction could not grow much, even though many of the doctrines parallel to those in Buddhism are vividly found in Pada Literature. Towards the 2nd century B.C. Jainism began to spread in Orissa and its essence was realised and accepted by rulers hereafter who patronised and preached the same on a wide scale. Buddhism and Jainism had their combined sway till the 5th century A.D., when Brahminism did again gather momentum but Buddhism still held good and superceded all other cults upto a period (9th century A.D.) when Sankaracharya preached his indomitable Vedantic cult. 'Nirvana' or 'Moksha' was the ultimate aim by the virtue of which the then prevailing degraded Buddhism could disappear from the religious atmosphere of India. By this time, came the Padas including the Siddhas like Kanhupa, Hadipa, Sabarpa and Luipa and so on, who by the virtue of their Siddha-literature, could endeavour successfully to raise the soul to a higher religious and spiritual plane. From the 9th century onward, Saivism and Brahmanism threw a new light on religion and literature. The great centres of worship for Siva and Vishnu were established by this time at Puri and Bhubaneswar. Orissa found no distinction between Siva and Vishnu and the then rulers did wholeheartedly patronise this combined cult to the manifold improvements of Orissa in social, ethical, devotional and day to day life as well. Symbolic indeed are the great Pithas of Puri and Bhubaneswar where literature and literary associations had their dominant influence by various ways of preaching the combined cult.

Markand Das, the celebrated poet of 'Keshab Koili' flourished by this time, worshipped Krishna and began a new era in religious literature. Then came the indomitable Sarala Das, though a devotee to Sakti clearly showed ways of worship of Vishnu, Siva, Ganesha, Durga, Indra, Dharma and all other Devas, as has been clear in his great *Mahabharata, Chandipuran* and *Bilanka-Ramayan*. He was the Vyasa and Valmiki of Utkal and his religious contributions in the great Oriya Mahabharata of enchanting and lucid language, could penetrate deep into all irrespective of caste, creed, sect and community. Like Vyasa he had the clear perception of things by dint of which he could realise the 'One Lord-theory' in the core of his heart. Religions in all their diversions are always different but the goal is and will be the same.

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Dauntless devotion to one Supreme Lord (be He worshipped in any form) was his essential way through which he could not only succeed in changing the methods of worship but could bring a new era in the creation of religious literature.

In the first part of the 16th century A.D. Chaitanya with his followers preached his cult of 'Suddha Bhakti' in Gaudian ways of Vaishnavism. This was the shining period of 'Panchasakhas', i.e., Balaram, Jagannath, Achyutananda, Yasovant and Ananta, whose mighty contributions could reveal the excellence of Orissan Vaishnavism that could surprise Sri Chaitanya himself. Gaudian cult differing though in certain respects, had to go hand in hand with Orissan Vaishnavism. Orissan Vaishnavism did closely adhere to the principles of Vedas and other scriptures.

Jagannath's contributions like Bhagavata (a divine treatise in close conformity with the original) have changed the moral, social and ethical background of Orissa vitally to a great extent. There is not a single hamlet or home where the simple, lucid and the deep importful lines from the Bhagavata are not cited. The simple, yet high and sublime ways of living, the ideas to be earnestly followed in genuine practice, the ingredients that rightly build a sound social character, the duties of a householder, the devotion and heavenly characteristics of Indian womanhood, the spirit of perceiving everything with equal vision, the effects of Yoga, have all been aptly blended herein, throwing a new light on human society at large and amplifying at their best, the most significant aims, objects and achievements of man who has got to abide by the doctrines of faith, love, piety, God-fearingness, self-help, unselfish actions and the glazing sense of rightly distinguishing between what to be adhered to and what to be abandoned forthwith. Virtually this new trend of socio-religious phenomena is a landmark indeed in the national life.

The high talented Balaram's Dandi Ramayana and Achutananda's Harivansa are very useful contributions to the society at large, so far as the idealistic, austere, devoted and dutiful life is concerned. The most elaborate ways of depiction, the highly fascinating style and at places the humorous, satirical ways of dealing the features in the simple manner, have all added to the religious, socio-ethical and moral literature of ours, burning with bright examples and blooming with all fragrance and excellence of what is taken to be divine, raising life in general to the higher strata as of sublimity. Balaram's *Brahmanda Bhugole,* Jagannath's *Tulabhina* and Achyuta's *Sunyasamhita* have delineated features pertaining to Yoga, Sunyavada, Mayavada, Pinda, Brahmanda Tatwa and the like, all aiming at the highest goal of an austere, rigid and restrained life. This particular trend was devotedly followed by many Yogis and a group of householders too living in this specific fashion. Devotion to Param Brahma, the Supreme creator, with the utmost spirit of self-sacrifice, has clearly marked this period in the sphere of religion and the preachers and reformers have struggled heart and soul, as revolutionaries facing odds of the deadliest type from time to time.

The 18 Puranas, like Garuda, Vayu, Kurma, Agni, Siva, Vishnu, Brahmavaivarta, Narada, Markanda, Matsya, etc., are the noble specimen no less contributing to this moral and ethical goal of life. These were the mighty attempts covering a number of years that commenced from 17th century and the various Gita, Samhita, Koilis (addressed to the cuckoo, the soul or the mind) have nonetheless influenced the social make-up, in harbouring the noble advices that are to be followed by all alike. The 'Chautisas' (beginning from Ka and ending in 'Ksa' according to the order of consonants) and the great 'Bhajans' of Balaram, Achyuta, Yasobanta and of many others either contemporary or coming afterwards breathe the same spirit, in all their clear and candid tone, entirely devoted to Paramatman who, as implored herein, can make life eternally blissful and purge the soul of all dirty deluding devices.

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Even despite indifference from various oppressive quarters, this spirit was so deep rooted in the heart of the society, that it not only prevailed as the guiding force of Orissa but spread its branches with foliage, fruits and flowers with all their fragrance, nourished by waters of faith undaunted and love unhindered, embracing all who came across to the sheltering shades, perplexed under the heart-burning strain of heat caused by disastrous disbeliefs and deadly inimical forces of 'Avidya'. This marked trend in religious life has clearly been manifested in almost all the writings of this specific period.

With the advent of the medieval period of Orissan literature, the aforesaid spirit remained the same, the goal remained unaltered and unchanged, even though there were categorical changes due to various schools of thought in types of pursuits clinging to different modes of worship from period to period. Dinakrishna, the most potential poet of Rasakallola, Rasavinoda, Dharmasagara, etc., Deva Durlabha, the poet of Rahasyamanjari, Avadhut Narayan (a bit prior) the author of *Rudra Sudhanidhi*, Bhupati, the enlightened poet of *Prem-Panchamrita*, though slightly differing from one another, have all endeavoured utmost to raise the standard of thought and action and selfless practices and devotion in order that the society at large would be happy, contented and divinely illumined, heedless to worries and anxieties, woes and cares whatsoever. Lord Krishna is the vital object of worship, as the full-fledged incarnation of the supreme and all devotion to him should be made at all costs. This was the tendency fostered by these poets to make human life worthy in all respects and to this end they had to combat the ugliest odds created by faithless non-believers. Maddened in divine pursuit, one has sung thus in wild ecstasy :—

A dive in to water holy
That carnal crimes does cure,
But 'Faith' in the name of Lord
Is heaven itself, be sure;
Thus let me cling to Thee
And sing Thy songs divine,
And let me dance in glee;
Let fools Your Self define,
And measure the path sublime,
That leads to the land of Thine;
But aimless let ever my life
Be mad, for naught to pine,

* * * *

A genuine poet is he,
Whose heart's free from lust;
A genuine reader is he,
Whose focussed mind's free from rust,
A genuine soul does taste,
A bit of the nectarean flow,
Ye, heart, in want of joy
Be up and shine and glow.

This golden trend of 'faith, love and devotion' continued on for more than a century and half hereafter to the end of the entire medieval period and the spirit of the same ushered into the writings of the modern writers like those of Madhusudan, Gopabandhu, Kuntala Kumari and many others. The 'Radha' cult came into the place of gopibhakti and indomitable devotion remained the central aim of worship. 'Anuraga' or stubborn faith played the role of means to the end and whenever or wheresoever it was hindered the devoted poets raised their revolutionary weapons to safeguard the divine cause not only of them but of the ideal social life as well.

Witnessing at times the social life going astray, the illumined Dinakrishna sang thus while struggling strenuously to bring the faithless to the path of truth, love and devotion and to pave the way clear for the right worship of Param Brahma, through proper action that only aims at every one's welfare :—

How I, O Lord, do come to face
A poisoned polluted earth that's void of grace;
Be I a bee at Thy lotus feet,
In work divine but never do meet
A crooked heart that roars aloud,
A fiendish mind in vain so proud.

* * * *

A hell of snakes where demons play,
A knell of death, where falls a prey,
The noblest intent to the satanic lies
Where cheat does reign and justice shies,
Where saintly signs do shine and glow
On outer body but inside flow

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The vices, dreadful, dirty, cad,
Like a poignant stream of Pluto's realm;
Is this O Lord, Truth or Dream?

* * * *

Let not a poet, a soul divine,
Sing not a song in praising rhyme;
Say not a sermon to a heartless hog;
Give not his blood to a biting bug.
If O by error does invite he the devil,
Let him then drive a dagger to death,
Let him not suffer with further a breath.

All these signify the divine voice of a poet of this period ever drawing the human attention to think out and achieve what is adequately good for humanity at large. With the advent of Chaitanya also, the Orissan ways of worship prevailed with all its essence though later on, the Gaudian cult played its role in the great writings of Vaishnavite poets like Sadananda or Sadhucharan, Abhimanyu Kavisurya Baladev, Bhakta Charan, Gopal Krishna, Banamali Gauracharan and many others. Bhakta Charan, Sadhu Charan and Abhimanyu paid all their attention to 'Chhanda' literature while others by the virtue of their songs, well knit with enchanting metre, had to sing the devotional spirit to enlighten the masses with a sense of worship of and faith in Radha and Krishna, the incarnations of Prakriti and Purusha. According to Orissan cult, Lord Jagannath, worshipped at Puri-Pitha (the Supreme represented) is the 'Avatari' and given origin to the 'Avataras' while in Gaudian case, Krishna is Avatari. This may make some difference in opinions under the two specific Vaishnavite categories, but the devotional aspects are always one and the same. Radha is the very potential energy of the Supreme and without worshipping this energy, the devotion does not become full-fledged. But the true devotee who has the straight approach to Lord by dint of selfless devotion cares for no via media in his spirit of worship wherever or howsoever circumstanced he might be.

These great bards, soaring like the most enchanted birds in the highest circles of heaven, have produced a typical phase of literature, intermingled with various sentiments in keeping with the treatises on rhetorics of our oriental love. During this period indeed, the deepest attention of the masses has been captured by this spirit and the aim of literature in all its changes and divisions has greatly been directed to this religious trend. The songs of Kavisurya, Gopalkrishna, Banamali and Gauracharan have been held so high in popular esteem, that the whole science of Tourjyatrike (Music in songs, instruments and dance) has been covered to this effect. The great songsters of our soil have strained all their wit and nerves to produce the effect of these divine songs and have succeeded in their endeavour which in many respects stands matchless in India. The songs are full of deep spiritual interpretations when we analyse the spirit contained therein but on the other hand the common run of masses can derive the utmost pleasure from the sentiments that go hand in hand with our day to day life.

When the modern era in our literature stepped in, Madhusudan was the pioneer in many of his lyrics and songs, preaching the gospel of faithful devotion to Lord, in several ways of Brahmavada.

The various religious trends have found a notable place since the dawn of our literature. The poets, as great reformers, preachers and teachers of the society have set the fire ablaze in a spirit of revolution with the sole aim of raising the social strata of life in general in all spheres of truly devoted civilized life based on well motivated thoughts, words and actions.

It may be admitted by certain classes of critics that Orissan Vaishnava literature always tried to maintain a sort of catholicity of spirit in its various ways of religious thought but it must be very well realised that with this triumphant weapon of catholicity, Orissa has stood formidably in face of so many changes and outside evil influences from time to time. Herein we have welcomed so many varieties of cults and sects but the very spirit of our worship with the utmost devotion to the Lord has gone deep into the mysteries and secrets of creation revealing the creator in its ever

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changing phenomena. This was all in the sacred lines of Vedanta Philosophy and the ultimate merger in the Supreme has been considered to be the best of our religious achievements. In other words, *'Soham, tatwamasi'* has become the only goal, in spite of so many deviations and degradations under different circumstances. Some circles hold that Orissan Vaishnavism never made an attempt towards the syncretism of conflicting beliefs under the aegis of Jagannath. It is true but it never goes without a credit for us. Orissa has always opened her doors of religion for so many cults and for so many factors that have ushered forcibly in. Herein lies the spirit of her true worship, of her greatness and excellence. With the broadest possible humanitarian view, she has welcomed all, took the essence of all and made an admixture of all in order that her philosophy should be enriched. Our Jaganath Cult has proved to be the most formidable foundation on which a great universal structure of religion can stand up. Gaudiya school has branded our spirit as heterodox but if we make a close survey of the ways of worship, religions and philosophy of any country, we come to the same truth, same gospel and same result ultimately.

With the advent of Christian missionaries in Orissa and expansion of western education and culture, Oriya literature underwent mounting change now discernible in its vast sources of poetry and prose.

Bhaktakavi Madhusudan Rao's contribution to Oriya lyrics, Kuntalakumari's inspiring songs, Kantakavi Luxikant Mohapatra's analysis of divine power have enriched the particular branch of our literature. In the early thirties of the century the green group writers in Oriya were inspired by ideas of universal liberty, fraternity and equality. The rich lyrical contribution of the sabuja group, free from any particular creed or religion breathe not only the spirit of divinity and internal magnanimity but also embody a strong element of character-building intermingled with deep sense of moral discipline. The lyrical tradition set by poet Nandakisore Bal, Gangadhar Mehar and Gopabandhu Das is founded on very sound basis of universal outlook and international humanism. Their writings exhibit no less intimate association of God and a liberated man inspired by peace and bliss.

Some of the lyrics of Kalandi Charan Panigrahi and Baikunthnath Patnaik abound in highly mystical and philosophical ideas which may reasonably be said to be the finest expression of a deeply engrossed spiritual mind.

Further the modern authors in post-independence period have very favourably reacted to the ideologies of the modern man and the volume of lyrical production show an aspiration for peaceful co-existence which is the crying need of the hour. Orissa has been the meeting ground of diverse views of life, thus exhibiting essential unities in the diversities of the type and for this purpose the writers have always subordinated their humble literary services to this great human problem. The poets ancient or modern have set their hearts in the great task of the discovery of the new man free from falsehood, and deceit which is identical with our dreams of a better world to live in.

Nationalism in the Atharva Veda: 'Desirous of achieving good of the whole people, the seer-sages did penance; and out of this penance emerged the Nation, might and vitality. Therefore let the understanding men be devoted to the nation.' (16. 41. 1.)

'This land is the mother and I am her son.'. (12. 1. 12.)

'This our Motherland gives equal shelter to people speaking different languages and following different faiths.' (12. 1. 45.)

—Quoted from *Cultural India*, Baroda.

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SCRAPS FROM MY EARLY WANDERINGS

(*Continued from the last issue*)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

At Udaipur

The prince of Khetri used to go to Mount Abu every year at an appointed time. Before he had started, I left Khetri and went to Jaipur. At Jaipur I made acquaintance with Samarthadasji, Editor of the *Rajasthan Samachar* and with him I went to Ajmir.

In the train I picked up acquaintance with a nephew of the Chief Minister to the Maharana of Udaipur. The nephew knew Bengali. He said, 'Once the Maharana wished to hear reading of the Bengali dramas written on topics given in Todd's *Rajasthan*. I therefore learnt Bengali and translated them to him. As he heard, he laughed out and said, "The Bengali Babus have metamorphosed our forbears entirely into Bengalees. Rana Pratap's favourite horse Chethakh has been made by them into Chaitak!"'

We came to Chitod where we became guests of the governor there. After visiting Chitod we started for Udaipur. There I stayed at the temple of Pala-Ganesjiu in the Rambagh garden. The Maharana had a big library in that garden. I saw there a fine collection of books on history and archaeology. But they were not permitted to be taken out. As I became familiar with the librarian I was allowed to take them out. I now began to study history and archaeology.

Chaturmasya and groups of Naga Sanyasis

At first I took to Madhukari (begging cooked food from door to door as the bee collects honey from flowers). But the rains set in and Chaturmasya commenced. Now came in groups of Naga Sanyasis (nude monks), some four or five hundred in number.

Once the Nagas had rendered military help in wars to the princes of Udaipur, Gwalior, Indore and Jamnagar. Since then they have had enormous influence in these states. The Dasnami (the ten schools into which Sankaracharya divided his followers) Naga Sanyasis have three principal monasteries (Akhadas) —Niranjani, Nirvani and Juna. By turns the Nagas of these three monasteries had their Chaturmasya in these states.

In the Chaturmasya the Rana sends everyday edibles to the Nagas, occasionally the Sheths (bankers) give them a Bhandara (a feast of the Sanyasis). The Chaturmasya extends from Dasahara (tenth day of the bright fortnight of July) to Kartiki Purnima (full moon of November). The Nagas have a jolly time of it in this period. They eat to their heart's content and when bidding adieu they get presents of thousands of rupees, elephants, horses, camels, etc.

My Novel Method

If a Paramahamsa Sanyasi came into the state during the Chaturmasya he was supplied with provisions from the store of the prince. Hearing of my presence, the state priest came to make arrangement for my food and asked, 'What should we do for you?' In reply I said, 'If any of your Maharana's sons do not go without food (Bhookha) and if His Highness comes in person to offer me alms, I shall accept it.'

With surprise and anger the priest said, 'How say you? The Maharana's sons go without food!'

'Your Maharana,' said I, 'has an only begotten son, I know it. He lives in plenty. I do not speak of him. I have heard the Maharana has eighteen lakhs of subjects. If they all have a square meal and no one is in want, I shall say that the Maharana's sons are not Bhookha. Can you affirm that none

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of the Maharana's subjects is pinched with hunger?'

'May I take it that you will not accept anything?' said the priest. As I refused, he left the place in a huff.

As this news gained currency the Headmaster of the High School at Udaipur came to me and said, 'Maharaj (your holiness), what you have said has reached the ears of the Maharana. He is annoyed and the officers or any rich man of the locality will not dare come to you. Moreover they are hatching a plot to throw you into a dark pit. Please be on your guard.'

I got afraid and remained cautious. My former acquaintance, the nephew of the chief minister had presented me with a store of provision—this served me for a few days. For fear of the Rana none dared give me anything.

I was hard pinched for want of food and clothes, on the top of it I could not stir out. I now wrote a letter to Hari Singh Ladkhani of Jaipur. He sent me some money. With a part of it I purchased clothes and the remainder was deposited with the Brahmachari of the temple who supplied me with food. A part of it was spent in feeding the Bhils out of love for them, as they had been faithful followers of the Maharana Pratap Singh.

Awful ignorance of the Nagas

Thus passed three or four months. In the meantime I was curious to know the ways of the Nagas and mixed with them occasionally for the purpose.

The Mahanta (abbot) of the Nagas was a good man; he had some education and was free from pride. He used to make no invidious distinction between himself and the ordinary Naga. 'If the Paramahamsas of our group,' said he, 'would teach us well, much good would come of us.'

We were engaged in such conversation when a Naga asked me, 'Maharaj, who now rules Lanka (Ceylon)?' 'Why, it is the English,' said I. 'No, never,' said the Naga, red with anger. 'Why,' said I with astonishment, 'if it be possible for Sri Ramchandra's birthplace Ayodhya to go under the British rule, why should it not be so in the case of Lanka, the domain of Ravana?' '*Kabhi nahi, oh Vibhikhanka rajya hay*': 'No, never. It is the kingdom of Vibhishana.' And added, 'we are not going to accept your Christian view.'

I thought of explaining the thing to the Nagas but the said Mahanta took me aside and said, 'These are ignorant fools, you cannot convince them. Rather they may insult you. Take your leave in peace.'

I now found that the Maharana was displeased with me and I had infuriated the Nagas. It was time for me to slink off peacefully.

After I had got Swamiji's letter encouraging me to dedicate myself to the service of the poor I would always ask myself whether he had chosen me alone for this task. How was it that my other Gurubhais enjoyed the bliss of meditation and worship, while I alone should go about with the burden of other people's misery on my head? What a joy would it be if he set all of us to this task!

Sometime before I left Udaipur I got a postcard written by Swami Ramkrishnananda from our Math. He informed me that all of my Gurubhais had been urged by Swamiji to engage themselves in the service of man.

Foundation of a school at Sri Nathdwara

From Udaipur I came to Sri Nathdwara via Ekalinga. There I became a guest of Raghunathji Bhandari. I there made acquaintance with Salagram Vyasji. He was the chief minister of the Goswami (abbot) of Sri Nathji and had gone twice to England. He had a library. I got there books to read.

While at Bhandari's house I noticed that his youngest son did not mind his lessons but only played about. I requested Bhandariji to send him to school. His reply was, 'Maharaj (your holiness), I tried hard to give my eldest son proper education, but he went to the dogs instead. Let what is in his fate happen.'

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I took up the education of his youngest son Gopal Singh into my own hands. By and by eight or nine more boys joined him. So our study suffered. At this time a young man, Kshirod Chandra Mitra, a former acquaintance of mine, came to me from Bombay. Kshirod had a smattering of English. I taught him Hindi so that he might teach these boys.

I started a middle English school at the instance of Salagram Vyasji and with his patronage. The fee-rate for the boys was fixed at Rupees two and Kshirod was appointed a paid teacher. Seeing that the school was progressing and had been placed on a solid footing I left for Omkarnath.

Omkarnath, Indore, Ujjain and other places

At Omkarnath I met a learned Paramahamsa of Maharashtra. He had his seat far away from Omkarnath. As one versed in Vedas I had not seen his equal.

From Omkarnath I came to Indore. Here I fixed my seat at one place and read the original *Ramayana* of Valmiki in eighteen days.

From Indore I came to Ratlam *via* Ujjain. There in a meeting I heard a famous Sanyasi of Arya Samaj speaking words contrary to the teachings of the Upanishads and I raised my objection.

From Ratlam I went to Jaipur *via* Chitod. From there I came back to Khetri in the company of Munsi Jagamohanlal, Minister of the Raja of Khetri.

Attempt at Re-introduction of the Vedic studies

Heretofore wherever I might be, I wrote letters to the Raja of Khetri. These were full of advice. At the bidding of Swamiji I made the Raja establish a permanent institution for the spread of education in his state. Funds were set apart for it and schools were founded in three or four villages.

The Raja had a Sanskrit school. Some 20 or 25 scholars, all from outside, were there. They were fed by the Raja. There were four teachers in the school. One Maithili (a resident of Mithila, North Bihar) scholar of the Vedas taught the boys Hastapātha and Swarapātha of the Vedas, i.e. they were taught only how to chant the Vedas and no explanation of the text was given. One grammarian taught the boys only grammar. A third taught some treatises of lexicon and poetical works and a fourth taught some other boys astrology.

I convinced the Raja of the futility of such teaching. I requested him and the scholars to see to it that all boys understood the text of the Vedas and the Vedangas might regularly be taught. The Raja wanted to know how such education might be imparted. I gave him proper suggestions and made him establish a Vedic school.

But poverty made the boys object to my system of education. They said that the cost of Vedic books would not be below twenty or twenty-two rupees, where could they get this money?

The Raja had been given a heavy burden to bear, so now rich tenants and officials were to be approached for annual subscription. For making provision of books for the boys a Students' Benefit Society and a Students' Helping Fund were established. A donation of Rs. 300 was raised. But this being found inadequate the Raja consented to make good the deficit.

The school was given the name 'Khetri Adarsha Vaidika Vidyalaya'. The rule was that all scholars should read the Vedas and study the Vedangas to comprehend the Vedic texts.

Necessary books were brought from Bombay. As Col. Prido, Political Agent of Jaipur, came now to Khetri, he presided over the foundation ceremony of the Vedic school and gave away books to the students.

The Raja's Darbar and the Misery of the people

At Khetri there is an annual Darbar (State presence of the prince). In the Darbar the Raja is seated among the chiefs of his own caste and the officers of rank, and they pay

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the Nazar (tribute). It is a solemn occasion in Rajputana. The Raja appears in a gala dress and receives his Nazar. That day the queen in her harem sits among the wives of the principal chiefs and officers and takes Nazar.

As I saw this Darbar from behind a screen I marked that some men, meanly dressed and with turbans on, came running and out of curiosity were peeping through the gate and other openings of the pandal but had to take to their heels as they were warned away by the sentries.

Such a thing happened three or four times and on enquiry I learnt from the gola boys that these people were the agricultural tenants of the prince and were in a sense the pillars of the State. In the afternoon they would present the Nazar to the parasites and a large sum would be collected.

In the afternoon I saw that those tenants were paying their Nazar to the parasites and there was a heap of coins. I was cut to the quick at this sight. The pity of it was, as I thought, these people were the pillars of the State, it is the money paid by them that went to make the prince wealthy and replenish his coffers.

My appeal to the Raja for the people

After sunset I came to the court and said to the Raja, 'Your Highness, I have been sorely mortified today.' 'Why,' asked the Raja. 'Those who, like butchers, drive their dagger every day,' said I, 'into the entrails of your poor tenants and extort money out of them sat by you in their pompous dress and gained honour and by paying a fixed paltry sum as Nazar gratified you. But those who are the source of fortune of your State, who are like your own children, who fill up your treasury by the sweat of their brow, could not have a mere sight of you. I marked that every time they came to have a look at you, your attendants and sentries scared them away like dogs and jackals. You boast of your descent from Ramachandra — it was that Ramachandra who once exiled his dear consort Sita to please his people in general. And what are you doing! You refuse to come out before those people, not to speak of sitting among them in the Darbar! What a bad luck, I had to see it with my eyes, I, a Sanyasi.' My voice was choked. I burst out crying like a child. The Raja and the men in the Darbar were dumbfounded.

After sometime the Raja broke the silence saying, 'Today I learn a great lesson, a great error is removed.' He at once called for Gangasahay, his 'Yaddast' officer. He puts on record what the prince ordered to be done. When Gangasahay came, the Raja said to him, 'From next year onward I shall have my darbar with all my tenants and receive the Nazar myself from all. Put this on record.'

It happened so in the Darbar next year and the universally honoured Swami Vivekananda saw it himself.

Other reforms

In the Khetri State the Dōms (scavengers) carried away the bones of dead animals and sold them off. Bones are a good manure — I explained this to the Raja and asked him to stop their removal. And for the improvement of agriculture, I made him subscribe to agricultural periodicals. I used to tour about in villages and bring patients to the Raja's hospital for treatment.

After a stay of five or six months at Khetri I left for the village Chidara. At my departure they at the stable gave me to ride a turbulent horse, blind of one eye. It threw me off and I had a sprain on the arm. At the Chidara village there lived many well-to-do merchants. There also I founded a Vedic school like the one in the Khetri State.

After I had left Khetri Raghunath Bhandari came there with his son Gopal Singh. The latter had fractured a leg in an accident at the railway station. At Khetri he was placed under treatment and Bhandari requested me in his letter to come to Khetri. When I came to Khetri he reported: 'The school at Nathdwara is no more in existence. Kindly make some arrangement for the education of Gopal.'

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After I had come out of Khetri I arranged that Gopal would have his admission into the Malsisar school.

I now toured about the noted villages like Alsisar, Jhunjhunu, Olgadh, Khandela, Lohagir, Surajgadh and exhorted the zemindars there to dedicate themselves to the welfare of the people.

I came to Jaipur to meet Swami Abhedananda and Nirmalananda. At their persuasion I came down to the Alambazar Math to see the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

(*Concluded.*)

चरैवेति

ON THE WAY TO HOLY MOUNT

There is no short cut to wisdom. The only way is to cleanse the mind thoroughly and tune it to the Infinite. This cannot be carried out easily in the midst of crowds or in the market place. Solitude, on the other hand, affords certain facilities. Hence earnest seekers have often resorted to mountain tops or wildernesses. What is of primary importance, however, is the drive toward perfection or the efficacy of the methods employed to harmonize mental energies.

This truth is brought out in one of the comments of Apollonius. He and his party were crossing 'the highest pass' on their way to India. The stars shone overhead 'unwinking', and the only sounds audible were the jingling of the camels' bells. It occurred to Damis that on such heights 'where man was nearer to God', people had attained communion with Him. But as for himself, there was no wisdom in sight yet. He had climbed higher than others but would go down 'no wiser than before'! Apollonius thought it his duty to correct this false notion of his companion. Said he: 'Neither were they the wiser for having climbed mountains.' 'The eye cannot show us the way to heaven, but the mind can, for it can soar higher if it is pure.'

At the frontier of Parthia, near the Indus, the Babylonian guide left the party after handing over 'a token of his king's generous foresight', — money for expenses and a letter of recommendation to the Indian governor across the Indus. This governor, in his turn, respectfully sent them on to his own ruler, 'the wise and kind Phraotes'. He was the type of 'enlightened monarch visualized by Plato', — a Janaka of that era. He is said to have contrasted the Greek and Indian attitudes toward 'spurious and debased philosophies'. While Greece punished 'counterfeiters of money' why did she not put restrictions on circulators of corrupt philosophy? In India, it was pointed out to the distinguished visitor, people had to 'qualify as teachers of wisdom after a searching test of their antecedents, character and education'.

During Apollonius' short stay with this king, he was told about the exact location of the 'Holy Mount of Wisdom, the mountain monastery and fortress of the wise men of India'. Probably it lay in Nepal. The account of Damis did not give any right indication. His sense of geography was so poor! He had, however, made good progress in some other direction. He and the two secretaries accepted 'handfuls of gems', not as personal presents but as items to be 'sacrificed to the gods on their return'. How could Apollonius object to this? Damis also asked for and secured fresh camels and a guide. The king, of course, of his own accord, supplied a letter of intro-

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duction to 'Iarchas, the head of the learned fraternity' whom Apollonius was to see.

In due course the party arrived at the foot of the Holy Hill. It is said that the countryside stood in 'superstitious terror' of the inmates of the monastery above. For they had 'repelled hostile attacks' with 'fiery rockets and thunderbolts', — applications of gunpowder which the sages of Nepal may have learned from the Chinese, according to Dr Schnur. Were these sages Brahmins or Buddhists? It is difficult to decide from the accounts which contain 'elements of both creeds'. Whatever their sect was, they had 'complete spiritual dominion over the region'. Even the king humbly approached them for guidance.

The story says that a messenger 'with a caste-mark on his forehead' welcomed the party at the foot of the Hill. As it was not proper to mention the Master by name, Pythagoreans employed the term 'Himself'. This messenger used the plural: 'Themselves commanded.' The 'command' was that Apollonius would go up at once. The others would remain at the foot. In the words of Dr Schnur, this 'command' had 'a Pythagorean ring about it that augured well to Apollonius', and he gladly accompanied the messenger to the monastery above.

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

All the points about Apollonius are taken from *Mystic Rebels*, as usual.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The article of Justice P. Ramakrishnan, I.C.S., is the gist of a lecture delivered by him at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras during the last birthday anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji.

Brahmachari Ramesh Chaitanya is from Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi.

Swami Prajnanananda is from Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

Sri Nanoobhai Dave is from Anand, Gujarat.

Prof. V. B. Athavale is from South Satara.

Sri Harkrishan Singh is from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Sri G. Srinivasan from Mysore, is a Government Research Scholar in Philosophy.

Prof. Gopal Chandra Misra is from Revenshaw College, Cuttack.

MORAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PEOPLE

The crisis of character is an oft-repeated problem discussed everywhere in India. The immediate effect of the last War is the degeneration of moral values. Moreover, with the Hedonistic ideas of life coming into prominence after our gaining the political independence, all values have become subservient to them. The sacrificing attitude common in the struggling days is on the wane. After the passing away of Gandhiji, there is nobody of his stature and influence to stem the tide. Moreover, in a way the entire world is becoming more and more secular in outlook and collapse of character is the result. How this sorry state of affairs can be remedied nobody knows. Outstanding thinkers like Toynbee and Sorokin believe that the salvation of the world can come only through resurgence of religion. But as it is not predictable how and when it will be possible, thinkers in every country are trying to find out ways and means of fostering the moral forces. In doing so much stress is

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naturally given on preaching moral and religious ideas, the eternal values that guided humanity down the centuries. It is good news that the Hindu Religious Endowment Commission is thinking in the same line. The importance of preaching has been very much stressed by Dr C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar, Chairman of the Commission. He said that 'the general consensus of opinion among the witnesses before the Commission has been that something should be done to combat the present wave of scepticism and bring about greater purposefulness and discipline and a religious outlook among students and young people. It was suggested that, as an essential feature, religious discourses and preaching by competent persons should form a regular programme.' But it has been found that the priests were not often properly trained and they were very poorly paid too. 'The result was that, except in a few cases, worship in temples did not induce that reverence and devotion in the minds of people, which it ought to. Witnesses, therefore, suggested that institutions should be started to give training in agamas and pujas and also see that the status of archakas and pujaris was raised.' (*The Hindu*, 28-9-60)

The well-known quarterly, *Gandhi Marg* has suggested in a recent issue that the Government should institute a National Commission for the moral reconstruction of the people, saying :

> We must now take stock without any delay or equivocation, of the shattering fact that there is a weakening of the moral fibre of the nation. The supreme task of the leaders of the people and the Government should now be to analyse the causes and to lay down the remedies clearly and firmly. That the remedies will have to cover innumerable areas and levels of national life and may take time to effect a cure should not frighten anyone determined to lift the people from the present rut of moral decay. We have the parallel of the National Planning Commission making their plans touching the life of the people on every side. What is now needed again is some type of a National Commission for the moral reconstruction of the people. No economic prosperity or scientific advance would be worth the name if they are built upon the moral decay of the people. Freedom from want and the scientific outlook are essential for the progress of the people and might, to some extent at least, influence moral reconstruction. Where there is want on every side and life is riddled with superstitions, all talk of moral reconstruction would be a mockery. Even so, the moral fibre of a people can never be sustained only on economic prosperity or scientific knowledge. Moral strength is largely a thing in itself, deriving sustenance from spiritual and cultural sources. The fertile waters of the spiritual and cultural renaissance under Mahatma Gandhi are being allowed to dry up. This is happening in spite of the Bhudan and Gramdan movements and the radiant personality and example of Maharshi Vinoba, as also of the profound allegiance of Pandit Nehru to some of the fundamental moral values generated by the genius of Gandhi. Nothing is needed more today than to get back deliberately and with all our strength to the moral and spiritual values of the Gandhian era. . . .
>
> It may well be argued that moral and cultural regeneration cannot be made to order and can come only from sources and factors which are beyond the depth and width of any organisation. We refuse to accept such a platitude. Throughout history spiritual and cultural forces have been generated and sustained through a variety of institutions and organisations. (Oct. '60)

It is true that doubt may be expressed how far these commissions would be useful. But it is an axiomatic truth that before actual work to be done by the Government and the people, clear ideas about the ways and means are necessary. A commission can very well do the job. When the job is stupendous we are apt to be pessimistic. But pessimism cannot be the guide for workers who feel for society. They must try their best and leave the results to the Lord. No other means is left to the individuals. The Government however can do a great deal. Of course, with the example of the dangerous total control in totalitarian countries, it may not be suitable to have even a good thing forced on the society. So the only way left is preaching of moral ideas. About the urgency of this, Swami Vivekananda repeatedly reminded us, saying :

> 'Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas.'

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'In this land of charity, let us take up the energy of the first charity, the diffusion of spiritual knowledge.'

'I am no preacher of any momentary social reform. I am not trying to remedy evils, I only ask you to go forward and to complete the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress, that has been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors. I only ask you to work to realise more and more the Vedantic ideal of the solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature.'

It is unfortunate that in our first flush of enthusiasm we did not pay heed to this aspect and laid too much stress on the acquisition of material goods, raising standard of life and developing the scientific temper, which also alas are still beyond the reach of common man though these slogans have damaged his moral fibre by creating immense hunger when there is no likelihood of its being fulfilled in the near future. We do not presume that the leaders do not know this, but it is high time they do something tangible also. That does not mean we as individuals should give up our own effort. Each man and woman who feels about the problem should try to do something to remedy the situation. Then only there is some chance of the moral standard of the people being raised.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

WHISPERS OF THE SOUL AND OTHER DISCOURSES: By Swami Yogeswarananda. Pp. 204. Price Rs. 1-4-0. Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Ulsoor, Bangalore.

This book reproduces the inspiring lectures delivered by the Swamiji, and as rightly claimed in the foreword, they have been so arranged as to present one compact whole, representing a system of Vedanta and Vedantic living. The greatest prerogative of man, observes the author, is his self-consciousness and ability to find out and study his own soul. A man's soul is none other than the force inherent in him, which even impels him towards goodness, and which ultimately leads him to everlasting bliss.

The cardinal tenets of the Vedanta according to the author, consist in the 'unity of God', the 'unity of all men in God' and the 'unity of God with man'. Chapter III deals with these aspects in great detail with a wealth of learning and close ratiocination. The other chapters on 'Monism, Old & New', 'Concentration of Mind' and 'Aum' make remarkably instructive reading.

The book which is priced extremely cheap, has to be in the hands of all spiritual aspirants, irrespective of religion or theology.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

GOSPEL OF THE GITA: By T. V. Kapali Sastri. Pp. 89. Price Rs. 2. M. P. Pandit, Aurobindo Asram, Pondicherry.

This, the third edition of a well-known book, has been brought out in an exceedingly attractive format. The essence of each chapter of the Gita is given, alongside the discussion of a good number of moot points in respect of both the Gospel and the Philosophy encased in it. It is rightly claimed that the author has steered clear of sectarian interpretation and prejudices. But one cannot but demur to his statement (P. 84). that 'even if one does not conform to the rule of the Shastra, if his faith is supreme and motive sattvic, he moves in a God-ward direction'.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

FRENCH

LE CHEMIN DE LA PERFECTION SELON LE YOGA-VEDANTA: By Swami Nityabodhananda. Pub. La Colombe. 5 Rue Rousselet, Paris. P. 131. Price 7.50 NF.

The Path of Perfection according to the Yoga-Vedanta is an able exposition, by Swami Nityabodhananda, of Yoga as a discipline for the realisation of one's own true nature which is divine. Each one, says the author, is perfect in his essential being; but this perfection is veiled from him by Ignorance operating on the lever of his ego. Yoga, as developed by the ancients in India, strives to dissolve this barrier and bring about the destined union between man as he is and the Divine as manifest in him as the self. Yoga has the physical and the psychological aspects and from whichever end one commences the discipline, both are activised in some way or other and converge in the total realisation that is the goal.

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Swamiji gives satisfying accounts of the main lines of traditional Yoga e.g. the Path of Devotion, the Way of Knowledge, the Yoga of Works and the Raja Yoga, and points out that the choice is determined by one's temperament and mental development. There is an interesting chapter on the significance of Mantra. Six centres of consciousness, Integration of personality, the Doctrine of Service according to the Gita are some of the main topics discussed in a catholic manner bringing out their universal application. The author emphasises throughout the 'extra-religious' character of Indian spiritual thought and practice and invites every one who has a sense of higher values to take to Yoga and verify for himself the truths underlying this scientific system.

M. P. PANDIT.

BENGALI

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA: By Swami Annadananda. 1, Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta-3. Pages 310. Price Rs. 4.

It is for the first time that an exhaustive life of Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, has been brought out. The itinerary of Swamiji was described by himself in two of his books, a part of which is being published in the recent issues of the *Vedanta Kesari*. Akhandanandaji was the first Swami to start the humanitarian service for which the Ramakrishna Mission is well known now. The book will be well appreciated, for it not only gives the life of the Swami, but also the earlier troubles and tribulations, struggles and achievements of the Ramakrishna Order. The profits from the sale of the book will go to the maintenance of the Ashram at Sargachi founded by him.

SANSKRIT-MALAYALAM

PRABODHA SUDHAKARAM OF ACHARYA SANKARA: Translated by Sri A. Sankara Sarma. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady. P. 94. Price Re. 1.

Sri Sankara, though the expounder of the non-dualism, advocates the 'upasana' of the personal and impersonal aspects of the Lord. He himself composed beautiful hymns on the principal deities of Hinduism. The devotees of each aspect of the Lord, find them elevating and also enhancing their own attitude. In the present book it appears that Sri Sankara has poured out his heart in glorifying Lord Krishna, whom the family of Acharya Sankara worshipped as their tutelary deity.

This book consists of 257 verses in Sanskrit arranged in 19 'prakaranas'. Discussing the transitoriness of this sense-world in his characteristic way, Sri Sankara points out the supreme necessity of attaining devotion at the lotus feet of the Lord Sri Krishna who is the repository of bliss and who bestows this bliss to His beloved devotees.

The translator and publisher surely will earn the loving regard from the devotees of Sri Krishna for bringing out this book in Malayalam.

BR. DIVYA CHAITANYA.

SANSKRIT

PUSHPAMALA: By S. Subrahmanyam. Published by the author, 'Saradindu', Tiruvanmiyur, Madras-20. Price Re. 0.25 nP.

This garland of flowers containing 48 bhakti slokas woven in various metres, sings in praise of Sri Krishna, the Lover and Ocean of Grace and Compassion. As the author-sadhaka crisply says there is no doubt one who meditates constantly on Sri Krishna with intense devotion attains the state of sayujya mukti. The composition is praise-worthy.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

PERIODICAL

DHARMIKA HINDU: Vol. 2, No. 1. Edited by T. K. Jagannathacharya. 4, V. S. Mudaly St., Madras-15. Annual Subscription Rs. 5.

This issue reveals independent views on the problem of caste and preservation of Hinduism together with its culture.

CHETANA: Edited by Sudhakar Dikshit. Published by Chetana Limited, 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1. Annual Subscription Rs. 3.

It gives a good list of available books on Buddhism as well as on the Upanishads, in its May and June issues.

CHETANA'S CATALOGUE: Published by Chetana Limited, 34, Rampart Row, Bombay-1. Price Rs. 3. Each Section Re. 1.

The torch of knowledge can be held in different ways. One can either teach a subject thoroughly or can show the way to many subjects. The latter category has many more grateful followers and are more analytically read, through reference to various works on the subject. This requirement has been supplied by this excellent publication under review, which helps in a thorough study of any subject with the

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views of contemporary authors. It looks as though, it is the map of India's mind and has endeavoured to present the constituents of Indian spiritual scene.

Between its covers, one can find about 4,000 standard works listed, mentioned with the nature of their contents and arranged subject-wise under four sections—Classical Hinduism, Post-classical Cults, Non-vedic Religions and Miscellaneous. The serious-minded readers who specialise in particular studies will find in this book a very useful guide and to 'Chetana' will go the merit out of this kind of purta dharma.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAM, RANGOON

REPORT FOR 1959

This Charitable Hospital is one of the biggest in Burma having 162 beds. On average 700 patients attend the outpatients' department. Under qualified doctors and nurses it has various wards, such as cancer, eye, ear-nose-throat, X-ray, physiotherapy, etc. and a well equipped clinical laboratory. A Nurses' Training School also has been added during the year.

The total expenditure incurred during the year was K. 4,66,725.06 while the income amounted to only K. 3,59,651.52 leaving a deficit of K. 1,07,073.54. The Managing Committee in view of the accumulated deficit in its finance, express their difficulty in keeping up the present standard of efficiency unless the Government and the public come forward and strengthen their hands with necessary funds.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE OF SEATTLE

During the fiscal year (Oct. '59-Sept. '60), Swami Vividishananda gave a public lecture every Sunday morning, discussing the various phases of Vedanta. The Tuesday evening class, devoted to the study of original Vedanta texts, is open to the public. During the year Swami started the Bhagavad Gita and has been continuing it. The Friday evening class is devoted to meditation and the singing of hymns by the members, starting with the Bengali Vesper Hymn composed by Swami Vivekananda.

The customary celebrations were observed throughout the year, the important ones being the birthday anniversaries of the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna and Lord Buddha, as well as Christmas and Easter.

Swami Aseshananda visited the Center for Sri Ramakrishna's birthday celebration and in addition to addressing the congregation at the Sunday morning celebration, took part in the symposium which is held every year in honor of Sri Ramakrishna. The subject for the symposium was "Social Justice And Religion". Those participating were distinguished ministers and a Rabbi of the following religious denominations: The University Methodist Temple, Christ Episcopal Church, Temple de Hirsch, and the Portland Vedanta Society, with Swami Vividishananda acting as Moderator.

During the past year Swami Vividishananda had a number of engagements to speak before school and church groups. Mention may be made of the P.E.O. group, composed of University Women's Welfare & Educational members, his subject being "Hinduism", and the Lakeside Boys School, a private boys school. The latter address was given before a group composing of 250 boys, as well as teachers, and the subject was "Indian Thought And The World Today."

Swami Vividishananda had his usual vacation during the summer, visiting Honolulu, Hawaii, where there is established a sincere group of students and members, and the Swami was kept very busy giving public lectures, classes and interviews during his month's visit.

Our chapel which was not originally designed as a chapel has never been remodelled in all the years since the Center bought the house. It has been decided to remodel and enlarge it so that it seats more people and that it will look more like a place of worship. Besides remodelling the chapel inside, careful consideration will be given to changing the outside so that the Center's exterior will also give the appearance of a place of worship. Contributions are being made and as soon as a reasonable sum has been accumulated in the Building Fund we shall obtain the services of an architect and interior decorator to work out detailed plans. It is hoped that the alterations can be made by the year 1963 at the time we observe the centenary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII DECEMBER 1960 No. 8

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

A devotee asked: 'Has God a form or is He formless?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'God has form and, again, He is formless. These things do not become clear until one has realized God. A man kept a solution of dye in a tub. Many people came to have their clothes dyed. If a customer wanted red, the man would dip the cloth into his tub and say, "Here is your cloth dyed red." If someone wanted his cloth blue, again the man would dip it in the same tub and say, "Here is your cloth dyed blue". Thus he would dye the clothes in different colours, dipping all in the same solution. One of the customers watched this with amazement. Then the man asked him, "Well? What colour do you want?" The customer said, "Brother, dye my cloth the colour of the dye in your tub". (Laughter.)

'Once a man went into a wood and saw a beautiful creature on a tree. Later he told a friend about it and said, "Brother, on a certain tree in the wood I saw a beautiful red-coloured creature". The friend answered: "I have seen it too. But why do you call it red? It is green!" A third man said: "Oh no, no! Why do you call it green? It is yellow". Then other persons began to describe it as violet, blue or black. Soon all were quarrelling about the colour. At last they went to the tree and found a man sitting under it. In answer to their question he said: "I live under this tree and know the creature very well. All your descriptions are true. Sometimes it is red, sometimes green, sometimes blue, and so forth. It is a chameleon. And sometimes it has no colour at all".

'Only he who constantly thinks of God, can know His real nature. He alone knows that God reveals Himself in different forms and aspects, that He has attributes and, again, has none. Only the man who lives under the tree, knows that the chameleon can assume various colours and that sometimes it remains colourless. Others, not knowing the whole truth, quarrel among themselves and suffer.'

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THE GOSPEL OF SERVICE

Saints have great influence on society. In fact, it is because of these men of God that all higher values persist in it. Otherwise the gravitational pull of life would have dragged man down to the lowest rung of culture. Among them again the avataras or Divine incarnations have very great enduring influence. Sister Nivedita once described this phenomenon saying that the society tends to lie low, horizontal, it is these great souls who are as it were perpendicular, uncompromising, to the society's tendency of lying low. Their teachings try to pull up the society in the direction of culture and nobler virtues, but with the passage of time the strength is as it were lessened and the society goes down to its original position. Then arises again another avatara. So it can be safely said that the saints are the leaders of society, especially in the field of thought. It is through their exhortations that people derive sustenance regarding their spiritual, moral and often social ideas.

This point can be substantiated from the history of different regions of our country. It has been pointed out by competent scholars on Maharashtra that a potent factor in the development of the idea of nationhood there was the teachings of the medieval saints, Tukaram, Ramdas and others. Prof. Limaye says that material power was contributed by the Maratha nobles and 'the moral force of the movement was derived from the preaching of the great saints'. Justice Ranade too said that as a result of the work done by the saints and prophets of Maharashtra 'there came into existence the beginnings of a national mind'. Prof. Patwardhan states in the following strain regarding the democratizing influence of saints: 'For five successive centuries Maharashtra was the abode of that noblest and truest of all democracies, the democracy of the *Bhakti* school. . . . (The saints) not only made the literature but also made the people a nation'. (Cf. *Life and Teachings of Tukaram* by Fraser & Edwards, pp. 19-21).

The ideal of a nation is thus the cumulative effect of the teachings of saints and thought-leaders. In encouraging man to strive for God they give stress on some of the social virtues. The national ideal may be taken as the teachings common more or less to all these thought-leaders. Renunciation and service, according to Swami Vivekananda, are such ideals. They are the two broad terms which can cover the different facets of spiritual and social striving. The gospel of service to fellowmen is a grand one. The importance of love of others and serving them is well recognized in the religious tradition. As a scholar on the Bhakti school, remarks:

> This definition of Truth as *Love of others as thy own self* is given in the *Bhagavat Purana* which is universally regarded as the standard authority of the devotional school second only to the Bhagavad Gita or the Celestial Song, worshipped as India's New Testament. In several places it expressedly declares that he is the highest Yogi (man of contemplation and action) who looks upon and treats others as his own self. Taking up that teaching, Jnaneshwar, the premier saint of Maharashtra, to whom all succeeding saints thereof, including Tukaram, owed a good deal of their religion, and who is regarded as the progenitor of Maratha nationality, which culminated in the great Sivaji's Maratha Empire, declared that there is no acquisition equal to that of *Sāmya*, i.e., the power of regarding others

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and treating them as your own self. If we interpret that by the light of the texts in the Upanishads and the books of our Saints, which say that there is nothing higher than or even equal to Truth, we come to the same idea of Truth as that defined in the *Bhagavat Purana*. That is made clear beyond doubt by Sivaji's spiritual adviser, Saint Ramdas, who defined Truth in the Marathi language of Western India as *Ananyapana*, i.e., 'the condition of loving others as thy own self'.

(N. G. Chandavarkar, *ibid.*)

It will be found that though Swami Vivekananda was the first in modern days to give much stress on this idea of service, it was never lacking in older tradition. The sayings of Saint Tukaram of Maharashtra may be taken for illustrations. He says in one of the Abhangas that a devotee of God has many qualities, but compassion to all beings is the most evident one.

Much and weighty though a man's merit be, if he is merciful towards all creatures, then alone is he a devotee of Hari. He styles himself their messenger; the slave of his own slaves, if they follow Hari in body, speech and mind. If a man is merciful to all creatures, if he sees everywhere the Lord of the Senses, such a man he never forgets, he follows in his rear everywhere. Tuka says, To his suppliants he is a retreat of adamant immovable, such as wait on him come back to rebirth no more.

(2251—Fraser & Marathe.)

As a religious leader, Tukaram naturally gives his views about the conduct of a saint. He dwells with special earnestness on the services of the saints to mankind. Often he bursts out into statements like the following, showing the importance of service in a God-guided life.

'It is the glory of the saints, that they came to bless the world; they wear out their bodies in serving others; forbearing love is the stock of their trade; there is no self-love within them. Tuka says, Their happiness is in the happiness of others.'

(2375)

Tukaram again exhorts man to keep company of saints and holy men 'who help to save mankind by serving their fellows'.

A developed soul sees God not only in man but in the lower creations too. So Tukaram speaks of service even of animals:

'Despise dogs and pigs for their bodies, but show them respect for their souls—embrace spiritually beasts and trees.' (876)

In one of his songs Tukaram speaks about the friend of the oppressed whom he considers 'as the very image of the divine'.

'Whoever makes himself the friend of the oppressed should be recognized as a true saint.

Know that God dwells in him.

Mild as butter both within and without, such is the nature of a good man.

He who takes the unprotected to his heart, who shows to his servants and to his own son the same compassion.

Tuka says, How often shall I tell you that he is the very image of the divine?' (266—Deming)

Saint Tukaram was a devotee through and through. He is all for direct contact with God. Mere rituals have no meaning for him. Service to others, according to him, is the sure way of the manifestation of God in a devotee.

'He who renounces all is ever pure, even as the flame that clings not to any impurity.

He who is truthful in speech throughout this worldly course is like the lotus to which the water never clings.

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He who serves other creatures and shows them compassion, in him the supreme Spirit dwells.

He who utters not nor listens to criticism of others, is indeed Janardan dwelling in the world.

Tuka says, He who knows not the secret is exhausted by ritual observances.'

(267—D)

The problem of good and evil, of merit and sin is an eternal one. The great sage Vyasa said that helping others is Punya and tyrannizing over others is Papa. Saint Tukaram too in the same strain says :

'Merit consists in service to others ; sin is injury done to them ; there is no other way of gaining anything.' (268-D)

Then he adds :

'Tuka says, Our own gain or destruction lies clear before us ; let each do as he chooses.'

When the good and the bad are known through discrimination guided by the directions of saints, it now remains for us to practise the good and shun the evil.

Service of man in the case of a devotee is the overflowing of his love for God. He sees his chosen Lord in all creatures and goes to love them. As the saint says :

'God is our friend ; through Him all are our friends.' (224-D)

But even in the act of loving he is ever conscious of the Lord through whom he is related to the created beings. So in another hymn he says :

'Do but this ; let the wives and wealth of others be nothing to you.

Be not covetous but follow your occupation comfortably.

Live peacefully without any covert struggle.

Enjoy the sweet and fragrant name ; be not slothful in uttering the name of Rama.

Be the friend of every one ; speak no word of evil import.

Avoid the wicked ; exert yourself for the saints.

If you form any hopes apart from God, they will end in the loss of all hopes.

If you foster the thirst for things, you will never find happiness.

Trust and be patient ; let God be your stay.

God will always take care of such ; no one will be an exception, says Tuka.'

(269-D)

Service takes various forms. It can be physical help to a needy person or enlightenment to an intellectually deficient man or moral and spiritual help to an exasperated soul. As a leader of eternal values Saint Tukaram naturally stresses more on the spiritual service.

'The good one will make it his aim to proclaim his true blessings, and will make known such moral rules as he perceives.

Yet we are in the hands of One who sets us dancing as he sees fit.

Infinite is the merit of him who points the way to others ; countless the obligations he lays upon us.

Tuka says, You have been merciful, O saints ; you have done your duty.'

(270-D)

The idea of Karma is paramount in Indian consciousness. Our religion and philosophy have been deeply influenced by this idea of effect being produced commensurate with the cause. So the saint warns us that unsympathetic people and tyrants will lose all their accumulated merits.

'If a man rejoices over the misfortunes of others ; his own feelings and their pain will recoil upon himself.

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Harbour not such thoughts in your mind; do not store up for yourself a capital of sin.

This will linger in your mind as torment and affliction; it will be consumed by fire and its place of rest burned up.

Tuka says, Thus all your merits will be destroyed; whatever is destined for us will be brought to pass by the operation of our past.' (271-D)

The philosophy of work for a religious man has two sources. A theist looks upon God as the supreme. All created beings are His creatures. So love of the Jiva is also essential for a theist. The Advaitin believes in the unity of existence. Brahman is all pervading, in fact He is all that exists. So a follower of Advaita sees God in everything. The devotee Tukaram too gets this mood of one existence and says that a man with this realization sees God everywhere.

'A man who has truly become God himself will look on all mankind as gods. Others do but tell loafing tales to amuse their hearers. A man who has dined cannot understand that others are hungry and thirsty, he thinks they are comfortable like himself. Tuka says, What we want is experience, tall talk is idle.' (2208)

It will thus be seen that the idea of dedicated service takes various forms and has its inspiration from different sources. But one thing is common, that service to humanity must be done by all people whatever their philosophical persuasion may be. Saints like Tukaram have built up our social conscience down the centuries and when we find these holy men stressing so much on service as an ideal we can easily understand why Swami Vivekananda spoke of it as one of the national ideals of India. Service is in fact becoming a world ideal and the importance of our acquaintance with their writings is that it will free service from the materialistic idea of self-interest and make it spiritually motivated. It is precisely because of this that Swami Vivekananda spoke about the twin ideals of renunciation and service, 'for one's own liberation and for the good of the world'.

'BECOME AN IMITATOR OF CHRIST'

(*Teachings of Saint Basil*)

You who aspire to become a fellow soldier of Christ's holy disciples, brace yourself for the endurance of tribulations and manfully betake yourself to the company of the monks. Even in the beginning of your renunciation of the world, show yourself a man; and that you may not be dragged down by attachments to your relatives, strengthen yourself by exchanging mortal for immortal aspirations.

Do not be careless of yourself as if you were a useless vessel — for by the renouncement of earthly goods you have won honor with Christ — but with much care and forethought set about finding a man skilled in guiding those who are making their way toward God and who will be an unerring director of your life. He should be adorned with virtues, bearing witness by his own works to his love for God, conversant with the Holy Scriptures, recollected, free from avarice, tranquil, pleasing to God, laboring for the spiritual advancement of his clients, without vainglory or arrogance, impervious to flattery,

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not given to vacillation, and preferring God to all else. If you should find such a one, surrender yourself to him, completely renouncing and casting aside your own will, that you may be found a clean vessel, preserving unto your praise and glory the good qualities deposited in you.

Do not think that all who live in a cell are saved, the bad as well as the good, for this is not true. Many indeed take up the life of virtue, but few bear its yoke. Be eager to imitate men of disciplined habits. Judge not the sins of others, but be master of what is your own. With your ears opened to give heed and your hands ready to execute the command you have heard, let your tongue be silent and keep your heart under custody. Be slow and dull for idle talk, but knowing and wise in hearkening to the saving words of the Holy Scriptures. Let the hearing of worldly tales be to you as a bitter taste, but the discourse of holy men as a honeycomb. Be not inquisitive nor desirous of seeing everything. Use your eyes to the purpose, use your ears to the purpose, speak to the purpose, answer to the purpose.

Do not accumulate a heavy burden of sins for yourself by having too soft a bed or by the style of your garments, by variety in food, or a table too richly appointed for your stage of self-renunciation, by the way you stand or sit, or by being too negligent or too fastidious with regard to manual labor. All these things bring harmful results, even if they are objects of your desire. Unless you quickly recognize them as a snare and root them out of your heart, they will lead you to defection from the life in Christ.

Do not make excuses, saying, 'Alas, my head!' alleging nonexistent pain and relaxing the rigor of the vigil for the sake of taking rest. Rather, be constant in secret prayer, which God beholds in secret and will repay you for openly. Hoard the accruing gains of the most perfect way of life, that in the day of need you may discover hidden wealth. Let your countenance be bright and cheerful, that you may give joy to him who speaks with you. Rejoice in every success achieved by your neighbour and glorify God, for his triumphs are yours as yours also are his. Perform the duties of your ministry with care as if you were serving Christ, for 'Cursed,' says the Prophet, 'be every man that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.'

The nearer you approach the higher ranks of sacred orders, the more you should abase yourself. Humility is the imitation of Christ; haughtiness and arrogance, the imitation of the devil. Become an imitator of Christ. Examine the actions of each day, compare them with those of the previous day and press on toward improvement. Spend your time in retirement, not for days nor months, but throughout many years, praising your Lord in song, night and day, in imitation of the Cherubim. If thus you begin and thus make an end, travelling the straight road for the short time of your probation, you will, by the grace of God, enter into paradise with the lamp of your soul brilliantly alight, to rejoice with Christ for ever and ever.

St. Basil, the Great was the archbishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia (329-379). He had founded a monastery on his own ancestral estates, and *c.* 356 drew up a Rule for the members of the community basing it upon the Rules he had studied on his visit to Egypt and other countries. This became the basis of most of the subsequent Rules of various monastic reformers of the Eastern churches.

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LETTERS OF SWAMI SARADANANDA

21

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
16-11-26.

Dear ——,

Received all news from your letter of 24th Kartik. I pray to Sri Ramakrishna so that you be well and strong again and have pure devotion at His lotus feet.

It is good that you are having Ayurvedic treatment. Take care and have medicine regularly. I am well. All are doing well here. Now and then write about yourselves and make us happy. Glad to know that special arrangement has been made in the Ashrama for your stay and diet. Whenever you require anything tell A. or S.; hope they will make arrangements for that as much as possible.

Answer to your questions :—1. . . . You may take the Name in the way you like.

2. It is better to do japa keeping the rosary down the breast. For, some say that the rosary should not be lowered down the navel. If it is inconvenient to you, you may spread the edge of the cloth or some other thing and then do it. The main objective is to take the Name of Sri Ramakrishna; so do in whichever way it is convenient to you.

3. Do not practise pranayama seeing the book on Raja Yoga. Do exactly as the Doctor says. Possibly he will ask you only to take in a breath or two in free air, and keep it for sometime, and then let it go out slowly. Ask him about this and do as he instructs.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

22

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Sasi Niketan, Puri,
29-6-25.

Dear ——,

Received in time your letter dated 10th Ashad. I did not answer the two letters you wrote to me while I was at Kasi as I could not decide what to write. Moreover after coming to Calcutta I had to decide so many affairs about the Math with Sivananda Swamiji and others in a meeting, and had to arrange so many other works. And after that I suffered for more than a fortnight due to fever. As a result there was shortage of time also. As soon as I was a little better I came here and now I feel almost well. Accept my blessings always and convey to all others in the two Ashramas.

Sorry to know that the condition of your mind and body is not good. With the growth of age, body gradually declines and one cannot hope to get back his health as before. So attend to the body just enough to pull on and try hard to get the peace of mind. The peace of mind can be had by spending more time in meditation and other spiritual practices depending fully on the Lord. Therefore call on Sri Ramakrishna and Mother as much as you can and pray to them with great yearning. I am also passing my days almost retiring from the work. For, the main purpose of human life is the realization of God. . . . What is broken cannot be built up again and Holy Mother has done this so that you might see your mind clearly. But this is certain that Holy Mother will never forsake you and will do what is good for you at the end.

The two slokas you have quoted from the 3rd and the 8th chapter of the Gita have no relation or sequence. For, in the 3rd chapter one thing is being told and in the 8th another. The meaning of the 19th sloka of the 3rd chapter is that the karmayogin who will spend the life in work remaining always unattached will in the end get the Parama i.e. the highest refuge. That is, realizing Sri Bhagavan in everything and achieving pure knowledge he will merge in Brahman in the end. In the 20th sloka of the 8th chapter Sri Krishna says that the karmayogin who dies at the time of 'smoky' night, krishnapaksha, dakshinayana

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etc., will live in the chandraloka for sometime and will then come back to the world. This means that that karmayogin who could not do work always without attachment and did not attain success in the path — will die at the time of 'smoky' night etc., and will come back to the world. Though the Jiva has no command over the Devayana or Pitriyana to go there still his course is determined by the work which he has done throughout his whole life and the karmayogin who has attained success in karmayoga and got pure knowledge he can know through the grace of God what course he will have when the body falls.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

P.S. When I return to Calcutta, remind me, I shall send you a good copy of the Gita. This has been translated by a friend of ours. You will know many things from that.

23

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
30-10-25.

Dear ——,

Glad to receive your letter dated 23-10. I came to know before of the passing away of Muktananda. He has got refuge at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother; he is in great peace. You are also their children. The purpose of your life will surely be fulfilled.

The state that comes during meditation etc., that you have written, is very good. Thus the Kundalini wakes up, and when fully awake it endows the aspirant with pure knowledge and pure devotion. To have the anxiety that 'God is not yet realized' is very good. I bless that your yearning should increase much more and you may have the vision of Sri Sri Thakur in a short time.

My health is all right. There is no certainty of my going to Kasi. Convey my blessings to K. and others.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

24

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
12-1-27.

Dear ——,

Glad to know from your letter of 28-12 that the birthday festival of Holy Mother is nicely over. Accept my blessings and good wishes always and convey to N., A. and others.

Go on calling on Sri Sri Thakur as you are doing, everything will come through His grace. We, of course, bless always so that you may have pure devotion. Is it a matter of little fortune that you are getting joy in calling on Him and having a good health and mind? Rest at His feet depending on Him; whatever is good He will do, you need not worry for that. As you have good arrangement at Rajpur, stay there itself for sometime. I am well. All are well here. K. is here; he will write to you after some time. He has received your previous letters. Convey my blessings to S. and tell him that I was glad to receive his letter. Let him write now and then about himself and make us happy and free from anxiety.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

25

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
21-12-26.

Dear ——,

Received in time your letter of the 17th instant. My body is all right. Accept always my blessings and good wishes and convey to C. and others of the Ashrama.

Glad to know all about Bhagavanananda from the letters written by you and him. It is good that he wants to stay at Kasi and do spiritual practices. Tell C. and make arrangements for his stay at night in the Advaita Ashrama. He has written that he will have Bhiksha from the chhatra. Help him as much as possible to make that also convenient.

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Glad to know that you like the picture of Holy Mother. Her birthday festival is almost come. Hope you and all others in your place are doing well. All are well here and in the Math. It is getting more and more cold now-a-days. Make us happy by giving your news now and then.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

26

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Dear Bhagavanananda,

Received your letter. Good that you like to have spiritual practices staying at Kasi. My blessings to you so that through the Grace of the Lord you might realize the Self and live in peace and happiness. Tell C. so that you might stay in the Advaita Ashrama at night; hope he will make all arrangements regarding this.

My body is all right. Make us happy giving your news now and then.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

27

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
4-5-27.

Dear ——,

Received your letter dated 24-4. Glad to know that you had safely had your bath during the Kumbha and that you have got to your liking in Swargashrama, a kutia on the Ganga. I pray so that you might think about Sri Sri Thakur and get much peace and joy.

It is a matter of great sorrow that Swami Tattwananda (Govinda), the pujari of Sri Sri Thakur here passed away yesterday suffering from small-pox. All through the will of the Lord. He passed away in such a tender age! All others are doing well more or less. I am well. Accept my blessings and good wishes always and convey to others. Tell . . . Chaitanya that I have received his letter and convey my blessings. Revered Mahapurushji and other sadhus of the Math are doing well. Sri Sri Thakur should keep you well and give you pure devotion — that is my prayer.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

28

Sri Sri Ramakrishnah Saranam

Calcutta,
17th June.

Dear ——,

Received your letter dated 13th June. Glad to know that you are thinking of God and reading the scriptures staying in the lonely place. I pray to Sri Sri Thakur that you should have pure devotion at His feet and progress towards peace and joy by the remembrance of the Lord and meditation on Him.

Accept always my blessings and good wishes and convey to your mother and to K., S., and all others there. I am well. Mahapurush Maharaj is doing well. All are well here and in the Math. The heat has lessened a little because of the recent rains here. Hope all of you are well.

Wishing you well,

SRI SARADANANDA.

Repeat the name of God always from the innermost core of your heart, and in all sincerity take refuge in the Master. Do not bother to know how your mind is reacting to things around. And do not waste time in calculating and worrying over whether or not you are progressing in the path of spirituality. It is *ahamkara* (vanity) to judge progress for oneself. Have faith in the grace of your Guru and *Ishta*.

—*Holy Mother.*

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SRI SARADA DEVI—THE HOLY MOTHER

N. K. KRISHNAMURTI

यथाग्नेर्दाहिका शक्ति रामकृष्णे स्थिता हि या ।
सर्वविद्यास्वरूपां तां सारदां प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥

To Her who presides as the Sakti or the Cosmic Power in Sri Ramakrishna even as the burning power dwells in fire to that Sarada the embodiment of all Knowledge, do I bow down.

SWAMI SARADANANDA

Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, was born in 1853 in a village named Jayarambati in Bengal. She was married at the age of five to Gadadhar of Kamarpukar, who was in his twenty-fourth year. Gadadhar was practising hard Sadhana. It was in order to divert his mind from the austere spiritual disciplines that his widowed mother and the elder brother searched for a suitable bride, without the knowledge of Gadadhar. But he knew all their plans and was also amused at it. In fact, when they failed in their search, Gadadhar suggested to them in an abstracted mood that if they would go to Jayarambati they would find a bride in the house of Ramachandra Mukherjee. This turned to be true and they were married.

Saradamani met Gadadhar twice after marriage before shifting to Dakshineswar. In the meantime, Gadadhar had passed through various spiritual disciplines and developed into a great saint. She heard many fabricated tales about Gadadhar. Her sufferings were great and she could not share them with anyone. At last she summoned her courage and decided to meet her husband who was eighty miles away. She was then eighteen and was also not accustomed to hard work. Yet she walked the distance and reached Dakshineswar. She straightaway went to the Master's room. Ramakrishna received her with great honour. On looking at her he found that she was ill. He immediately sent for a doctor and arranged for the treatment.

One day the Master asked her, 'Tell me the truth of your heart. Have you come here to drag me to the path of samsara?' She replied immediately, 'No, why on earth should I drag you down to the path of samsara? I am here to help you in your chosen path'.

When, Totapuri, the Guru of Sri Ramakrishna heard about the marriage, he remarked, 'A wife presents no danger to one who is really established in Brahman, for a true seer of Brahman sees no difference between men and women being rooted in the perception of unity of the Self'. The Master wanted to test himself and so he allowed his wife to be by his side and serve him. His mind was never distracted from the path of purity. One day Sarada asked her husband, 'How do you look upon me?' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'The Mother who is in the shrine, the Mother who gave birth to this body and is now living in the Nahavat, even she is by my side. Really I tell you I find in you an embodiment of the Divine Mother Herself'. To Sri Ramakrishna, God was primarily the Mother and the woman was Her shrine. In fact Sri Ramakrishna saw the Goddess Kali under the veil of his wife.

Later, on a New Moon night, he worshipped her as the Divine Mother Herself, according to the Tantrika method. This worship had profound significance to the worshipper and the worshipped as a unique instance. It was only long after the Master passed away that she quietly manifested her power in gradually consolidating the life-work of her husband and master and by becoming the veritable means of liberation for many souls. Service to the master was her only ambition. Her thoughts and aspirations were all imbued with his ideal and she became the true helpmate in fulfilling his life-mission.

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Sri Sarada Devi was a worthy consort of Sri Ramakrishna, the born recluse. The following is an instance which will show her stature. When a Marwari devotee offered ten thousand rupees to Sri Ramakrishna, he immediately prayed to Mother not to tempt him. In order to test her mind, he told his wife, 'Well, this devotee wants to present me the money, I have refused it and now he wants to give it to you. Why don't you accept it?' Immediately she replied, 'It cannot be accepted. If I take, it will be the same as your taking. It will have to be spent in your service and you will be the virtual owner of it. People revere you for your renunciation. So this money must not be accepted.'

Sri Ramakrishna passed away at her thirty-third year. The remaining period of her life of thirty-four years was remarkable and significant in every respect. She proved herself to be the first amongst the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. A large number of people worshipped her even in those days as the Holy Mother Herself. She embodied the spiritual power which Sri Ramakrishna gave to the world. The consolidation of Sri Ramakrishna's life-work was her work for humanity.

The grand message she left behind can be appreciated from the following single instance. A few days prior to the passing away of the Holy Mother, one of her spiritual daughters sobbed bitterly at the thought that the Mother was about to leave them. Then the Holy Mother said, 'Why do you fear? Have you not seen the Master?' And then added, 'If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child, this entire world is your own.'

THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

Complementary Entities

Nature abounds in many a dual entity in which one aspect complements the other and stands in relief. The dual entity ever available to denizens of the earth is the sun and the moon. One is constant light, while the other waxes and wanes. One scorches and the other cools. One is self-luminous, while the other shines in borrowed light. Nothing can conceal the sun, whereas the moon plays hide and seek with us. While our sun is dazzling white and its absence means black darkness, astronomers hold that there are colourful suns in the firmament beyond the reach of our naked eye. The wonder about them is that their lights and shades function as counterparts; all shades are green in the realm of the red sun; all shades are red in the realm of the green sun. In the light of the blue and the yellow suns objects cast shadows which are yellow and blue, their counterparts. This dual aspect and this mutual fulfilment get very well expressed in human personalities who come with a message.

The history of the world is but the expanded version of the biographies of great men. Men destined to play the role of saviours choose to hail, individually as well as in pairs. Mention may here be made of a few examples of such pairs. In the days of yore came the sages Nara and Narayana, revealing the dual aspect of austerity—the magnet of Godhood at one end attracting the iron of the human soul at the other. After a long while came Sri Rama and Lakshmana, the one embodying high purpose, and the other devotedly aiding its achievement. Later still came Sri Krishna and Arjuna—the embodiments of the Paramatman and the Jivatman. Among the Saiva Acharyas of the South, Vagisa and Gnanasam-

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banda complement each other. The doings of these dual personalities shed lustre and add importance to their mission. It may well be said that in the absence of the one the work of the other would have been incomplete and obscure.

The austerity of the sage Narayana represents the grace of the Lord; and the penance of his companion, the sage Nara, stands for the human endeavour to effect a reunion with the Maker. A study of these two austerities in combination reveals to us the relationship between the grace of the Lord and the urge of man to avail himself of that grace. Again self-help is the best help; but to help oneself one hand is not sufficient, both the hands have to work in union. This was exactly what the inseparable Rama and Lakshmana stood for. Bringing about a state of Yoga or yoking human endeavour to the Divine plan and purpose is the sure means of achieving prosperity, victory, expansion and sound polity. The combined doings of Sri Krishna and Arjuna reveal this grand truth. The Saiva Acharyas, Vagiswara and Gnanasambanda, were not equals either in age or in social setting. But in their giving themselves over to the service of the Lord they were supremely at one with each other. Artificial variances could not intrude on the dual setting of their service to the Lord. We see thus that among these dual personalities the doings of one could never have been complete without the other's complement.

The Modern Inseparable Two

That history repeats itself has repeatedly been verified. But adaptation to changed times is the novelty we see in the repetition. Today as in olden times two inseparably associated entities have blessed this earth with their sojourn. The world knows them as the Master Ramakrishna and the Disciple Vivekananda. A century and more has rolled by since the Master came on earth. Twenty-seven springs after his advent came Vivekananda. Today they are not physically with us. But the movement set in motion by them is with us as a young growing plant. It will yet grow into a spreading tree, providing shade and yielding fruit. The Disciple has stated that it will take quite a number of centuries before his movement comes to full fruition. Today we are seeing only the first hundred years' growth of that tree which is destined to last ages.

People there are who take to comparing and contrasting the Paramahamsa and the Swami. It may not be far from the truth to say that in their evaluating these two personalities these people are in a way revealing their own disposition and understanding. That it was the Paramahamsa who really set the wheel in motion while Swami Vivekananda was a mere proclaimer of this fact—is the view of some. That the world has come to know of the Paramahamsa because of his happening to be the Master of the mighty Vivekananda who has inundated the world with a spiritual flood; and that but for the Swami the Paramahamsa would have been no better than an unknown wave in mid-ocean; and that in the absence of Vivekananda the world would not have had the Ramakrishna Movement—is the contention of some others. In judging these ways people only express their own understanding of the design of Providence. Had however these two entities remained unassociated with each other, what would have been their respective impact on society nobody can rightly gauge.

The Divine Longing in the Master

Praiseworthy is one's desire to share with others one's acquisition, whatsoever it may be. But all are not endowed with such a noble outlook. We find in the world only such folk as are interested in grabbing property and pleasure exclusively for themselves. This is a base attitude. But heavenly attitude is that which seeks to share with others one's boon and bounty. This laudable trait is sometimes found even in those who are given to vices. Those who are addicted to hemp and liquor delight in sharing them with others. Getting intoxicated is bad in itself. But the

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desire to make others happy like oneself through intoxication is something to be admired. Men there are however who seek to dispense to others only whatever is good and auspicious.

Association with God was all that the Paramahamsa sought from boyhood onward. He held that the Divine was his only kith. Other than God he had no relatives to be regarded his own. He craved and craved for God alone. Soon he contacted the Deity as Mother and incessantly clung to Her. His utter dependence was on Her. Not being satisfied with one mode of approach to Her he felt an urge to explore the paths of various religions; and he was victorious in all his explorations. That all paths lead to the same Goal was his unique experience. He felt that the joy of his realizing the harmony of religions would be incomplete if he did not share it with others. So a third longing now cropped up in him for a befitting companion who would understand and appreciate his spiritual discoveries. He supplicated his Mother to bring to him a worthy One who would enter into the very spirit of his realizations. The Cosmic Mother gave him the assurance that She would bless him soon with a comrade of the type he earnestly sought. The Paramahamsa anxiously awaited the coming of the promised companion and interpreter.

Narendra's Graces

Swami Vivekananda was known in his boyhood as Narendra. Several noble traits marked him from childhood on. And purity was the foremost among them. He was indeed the very embodiment of it. In thought, word and deed he was steeped in sanctity. As the sky eternally retains its taintlessness Narendra was established in ethical excellence verging on divinity.

Both at school and at college Narendra shone as an ideal student. In comprehension he was quick and in understanding unerring. His teachers as well as professors were amazed at his extraordinary intellect. Narendra proved an example of the truth that the boy in body need not necessarily be a boy in mind. He was far above his age in the maturity of mind. A keen memory supplemented his profound intellect. What he once heard or studied found a lasting place in the folds of his memory. If there was anything untouchable to him it was unwholesome literature. He utilised the searchlight of his penetrating power of grasp to the enquiry into the great and the sublime.

Narendra's stature was a blend of grace and strength. He was a bull among men. He never knew lethargy. Every small act of his revealed manliness. He was an adept in wrestling and fencing. All the same he was an utter stranger to the ways of the ruffian. His strength ever served the cause of righteousness. His voice had in it both majesty and melody. He was an accomplished musician and sang rapturously. He could also play with ease on musical instruments.

In the midst of ever so many divine traits patent in the youthful Narendra there was a marked contrast between him and the Paramahamsa in that while the would-be Master started his career with a madness for God, the would-be disciple started his, with a consuming doubt about the very existence of God! The one lived a life of incessant and ardent prayer to the Almighty, and the other delighted in deep meditation on the inner glory, which in fact was his pastime. The meditation which the Yogis strive hard to achieve was a matter of course and play to this boy Narendra. No perturbation of any sort touched this youth, because of his being established in the peace within. Prayer was the nectar that nourished him who was to be the Paramahamsa. Meditation was the tonic which warded off all earthly concerns from the mind of the Vivekananda to be. Revelling in the plenitude of his inner being constituted the meditation of this virile youth.

The Seer sees

He who sees into the reality of things is the true seer. The Rishis of yore were such seers. The Paramahamsa came under this

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category. He ever saw into the core of things. It is not given to us ordinary folk to know the inner make of a person even after a close and prolonged acquaintance. But this was not the case with the Paramahamsa. Just as we clearly see the contents of a glass case he could clearly see into the mental make of anybody, with the result that there was not even a solitary instance in which he was obliged to revise his first impression. We recognize a person only at the physical level, whereas he probed into the mind and knew the real man. The true seer that he was, it was given to him to have a correct reading of a character.

Does God exist? If He does, can we contact Him? Or at least is it possible to come across a person who has contacted God? This was the thought that was ransacking Narendra's brain. This storm to which Narendra was a prey was hardly ever evident to any of his friends. His mind was oscillating between theism and atheism, between optimism and pessimism, between science and con-science. Do-nothing and get-on men could by no means understand the cyclone in his psyche. Seek and thou shalt find is the law of life. Narendra earnestly sought, and providentially a way opened for him. A close relative of his made it plain to him that no purpose was being served in his running to this society-leader and to that savant, but that something tangible could be had if he ever approached the Paramahamsa at Dakshineswar. The truth-athirst Narendra took the suggestion. On a fine day with his mind floating in extra-mundane regions he presented himself before the Sage who had impatiently been awaiting the arrival of this would-be counterpart of his. Hardly did the Paramahamsa finish saying, 'Ah! Thou hast come at last!' when he entered samadhi. Narendra was a mute but enquiring spectator of this strange development. After a while the saint's mind descended to the earthly setting. He then asked for a song from the young visitor. Narendra readily responded and burst into singing a devotional song, which, spurred aloft by the immediate august Presence, he sang more rapturously than was his wont. The Paramahamsa was again lost in samadhi, to come down from which it took him some time. The Paramahamsa then gazed at the lad to his heart's content. The blazing divinity enshrined in the youth was evident to the infallible spiritual eye of that earnest observer. He wondered how a materialism-saturated city like Calcutta could produce a born-perfect being like the one before him! He led the lad from the gathering within the room apart to the verandah without. Tenderly laying his hand on the lad's chest he announced, 'Here resides Siva'. Next, touching his own chest he stated, 'And it is Sakti that resides here'. Narendra was not prepared for this startlingly extravagant claim. His critical intellect recoiled from it. He felt all the same that his heart was somehow being drawn towards this eccentric of a Paramahamsa. But the youth kept the conflict in him to himself.

As days passed the intimacy between these two antithetical personalities was steadily deepening. But it was not given to all to understand Narendra as did the Paramahamsa. There were not wanting formalists who could not see the true make of Narendra. Tricked by their faulty reading they represented him in their own way to the Paramahamsa. They carried all sorts of wild rumours about this apparently Bohemian youth to the Master. But Sri Ramakrishna saw full well the hollowness in these tales, well-intentioned though they were. The conviction of the Master was that no taint of any kind could touch Narendra, notwithstanding the environment he might happen to be placed in. Blazing fire is there to consume all the rubbish that is consigned to it; the fire for that reason does not get polluted. Even such was Narendra. He was the very embodiment of perfection. He had come to emancipate, and not to get entangled. This conviction of the Paramahamsa was no postulate of sentimentalism, but the perception of a Seer. At his very first meeting he could see what Narendra was and any suggestion to the contrary was to him pointless.

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Getting into Disciplehood

Narendra did not understand Sri Ramakrishna, as Ramakrishna understood him. The scrutiny of the lad saw something very abnormal in the person to whom he had been directed for enlightenment. He wondered if it was not a sort of mental aberration resulting from inordinate austerity that had made the Paramahamsa behave so very out of the way. All the same the reason in Narendra could not account for the mysterious manner in which his heart was being drawn towards this strange person. As the contact and intimacy deepened Narendra in spite of himself began to surrender to the ethereal charm in the Master. For one thing his native genius and discrimination were getting more and more clarified through this all-absorbing relationship. Reasoning developed through book-learning is good in its own way; but that attained through contact with an awakened soul is superior and borders on inspiration. We shall cite an example. In the course of a talk on matters high and elevating, referring to a certain cult Narendra condemned it as 'blind faith'. The Paramahamsa admonished, saying, 'Are there, Oh Naren, two kinds of faith — the blind and the eyed? You hold the faith that So and So is your mother. Is it blind faith or eyed faith?' This apparently simple but profoundly true analysis was something which Narendra had not expected from this seeming rustic. He got startled. He marvelled what a difference there was between the reason derived from book-learning and that which was the outcome of intuition!

Astoundingly unique was the deepening relationship between the Paramahamsa and the Vivekananda to be. The consciousness of being a Guru never stole into the heart of the former even for a moment. To all intents and purposes it was just an ardent friendship that was drawing them nearer to each other. But the lad was not aware that he was being steadily consumed by the affection of the other. This affection was developing into an ethereal love. No earthly kinship could come anywhere near it. 'I do not know who the parents of Narendra are; but what of that? Whenever I see him I go into rapture. Seeing Naren is to me verily seeing Siva face to face' — thus did the Paramahamsa express the nature of his bond with the lad. It was the practice with the ancient masters to enquire of a prospective disciple his caste, lineage, etc. But the Paramahamsa completely set aside that convention. Perhaps it did not even cross his mind. This his conscious break with that time-honoured practice is very significant and is well worth a study, because he was an involuntary fore-runner of the Time-Spirit.

If the Paramahamsa did not happen to meet Narendra for a few days at a stretch he used to feel quite uneasy. He would send word through several persons, desiring Narendra to go to him. Many were the days when he would pine for the youth in the manner of Srimati Radha for Sri Krishna. It is somewhat difficult to aver that the Paramahamsa's pangs for spiritual fulfilment were more intense than his hankering for the establishing of an inseparable relationship with this lad endowed with divine potency. With the sole object of meeting him, the Paramahamsa once entered, uninvited, an assembly of the Brahmos. Unfortunately a cold and confused reception greeted this intruder. What took place there was evidently an insult flung at the Paramahamsa. But not even a passing thought of the discourtesy ever crossed the mind of the victim. His one concern was somehow to meet his favourite. Narendra was quick to take in the situation and escorted the sage out through a backdoor. It pained him to the core that the Paramahamsa had to suffer humiliation solely for his sake. Their mutual regard was in this manner getting enriched in several ways.

The souls whom the Paramahamsa contacted appeared to him each a luminary. Only the intensity of the luminosity varied in proportion to the refinement each soul had undergone. Ordinary men were like tiny stars in his sight. Eminent men like Keshab Chunder Sen were to him bigger stars. But that Narendra was blazing like a sun was what he beheld. Superb was

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his fondness for this youth. Narendra himself protested against such inordinate fondness, warning that it might put the Paramahamsa in the plight in which Jada Bharata found himself for having developed affection for a deer. It was the Paramahamsa's bent to give weight to any statement that this youth made. He therefore wondered if it was a fact that he had developed a binding attachment as alleged by the youth. Like an impatient boy he hastened to the presence of his Chosen Deity in the temple. He implored of the Cosmic Mother whether it was true that he was fostering earthly attachment. Instantly came the Mother's revelation: 'Verily you behold Narayana in Narendra. Your affection for him does in no way savour of worldliness.' Relieved of all anxiety and infused with a new fervour he came back to Narendra and conveyed to him the clarification the Mother was pleased to make. He further chid the youth for his hasty judgment. This was how they were growing into each other on the divine level.

(To be continued)

INTELLIGENCE

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA

Intelligence is mental ability. It is quick understanding. It is brain force. It is simple power anterior to all action.

It is not that each person is born with a fixed quantity of intelligence. It is not that intelligence is static and unchangeable. It is not that you should get along as best you could with what intelligence you have at present.

Intelligence covers any power of apprehension. Intelligence is a plastic quality. Intelligence can be expanded, deflated, decreased or left underdeveloped.

Growth from within rather than force from without paves the way for intelligence. The first step to intelligence is to know that you are ignorant.

No one with limited intelligence need be given up as hopeless. Intelligence is a quality that can be increased in the individual through use.

Intelligence is universal. Intelligence is available to each to the extent each develops capacity to make use of it. No body has monopoly on it. There is no limit to the exercise of the intelligence.

Exercise your mind constantly to increase your capacity for mental expression. Become clean and clear channels for the flow of intelligence into your awareness.

Discern what is true is true and what is false is false. This is the mark and character of intelligence.

Human learning should bear the blessing of God to introduce you to wisdom of the Divine.

Intelligence is like fire. It is like a torch lighting many torches and remaining the same. Further it is a torch or fire-brand according to the way one uses it.

Use intelligence not in a selfish manner like a lamp in the study room for your own seeing. Use intelligence as a lighthouse uses its lamp that those afar on the sea may see the shining, and learn their way.

Intelligence does not seem to have a conscience in its wild growth unconsecrated and presents a saddest sight on which the sun looks down.

Intelligence is lost if not backed by the energy of character. If head is fed and heart is starved, it leads to dry intellectualism. If heart is fed and head is starved, it leads to

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wet sentimentalism. So strike a happy balance between the two.

Intelligence and industry are not incompatible. The happiness of life will be increased if they march hand in hand.

Intelligence not based on the culture of religion in the heart, is only civilized barbarism and disguised animalism.

Intelligence might have light to make advances. But without moral principle it produces not permanent progress in the pilgrimage of life.

Mere intelligence is no power but its action is power in the application and assimilation of Truth.

The intelligence of an individual becomes like lofty mountains, all ice and snow, if it unduly rises above warm heart of the earth. If its eye is fixed on the Eternal and Infinite, its growth is hale and hearty.

The enlightened intelligence is what is to be aimed at. Then there will be boundless scope for gratification. And its highest activity shall be bliss.

Intelligence and integrity should be wedded together. They will enable an individual to stand firm and not to fall or fail. They cannot but lead to true greatness.

Straightforward intelligence and integrity put to flight all trick and duplicity. Integrity minus intelligence is faint and feeble, weak and worthless.

Integrity of one's own mind is indeed sacred. Absolve you to yourself. The world will pay you homage, since integrity costs self-denial and is glorious at its end.

Men of action are only unconscious tools of the men of intelligence. Intelligence is in itself only power. Its value depends on its application, in a right manner.

Intelligence is no mere terrace for a wandering mind to walk up and down with a vanity air. It is not a shop for sale, for profit and loss. It is a rich storehouse for the glory and goal of life. It is the man's real estate for the realization of the Self.

A knowledge of one's own ignorance is the first step toward true intelligence. You cannot make another comprehend your intelligence unless you are able to comprehend his ignorance.

There should be a spiritual spirit and life in intelligence to give it its energy. Otherwise there is no more power in it than there is in a stone or a stick or a star, being inert.

Wood on fire is fuel. Intelligence on divine fire is power. Men become strong in the world in proportion of this spiritual power.

The essence of intelligence is in its being experienced at the altar of Truth. The learned intelligence is like a tank and the wisdom of the wise is like a spring.

Isavasyopanishad says that a man of ignorance enters into darkness and that a man of mere intelligence enters into greater darkness.

The brightest blaze of intelligence fades into insignificance before the smallest spark of Divinity. Intelligence should not be folly but guided by Grace.

Intelligence digested is practical wisdom. It is rare commonsense of value and importance. It can heal the woes of the world.

Man of intelligence should not fancy himself enlightened, because he sees the deficiencies of and in others. It is sheer ignorance because he has not reflected upon himself.

The empire of intelligence has to be built on the glorious illumination of the Self (atman). It will then gain and never lose. It will then help attainment of new conquests.

True intelligence is not to be obtained easily. It is not had for confering superiority over others. It has to be worked for, studied for, thought for and prayed for.

What is entrusted to memory is no intelligence. It is only a retention. What is not fully understood is not possessed.

Intelligence is generally gained on comparison. It is then relative knowledge, subject to errors and passions of humanity. In such a knowledge there is satisfaction as well as appetite.

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Intelligence is mental wealth. Put it in circulation and it enhances its value to the circulator, in its depth, confirmation and readiness for use. Seldom is it given to keep but to impart.

The bright and brilliant intelligence of man fears no danger, spares no expense, contemplates the distant, comprehends the great, examines the minute, looks in the volcano, dives into the ocean, explores sea and land, wings its flight into the skies to catch the sun and the moon, ascends to the sublime and what not.

It is ignorance to ask a person what he has known and done in the world. It is intelligence to ask a person what he has not known and left undone in his life. Man can conquer the world under his fist objectively but conquest or culture is to conquer himself subjectively.

Become more alert to intuitive instructions that guide you through life with ease and joy. Give no room for errors to creep in but live by the deepest insight of the Self in you.

The end of intelligence is ecstasy in life. It is the manifestation of the Self. It is the truth, proof and experience.

Positive wisdom leads to Self-realization. It is the prime wisdom of the Self. It expresses in the man of wisdom who can speak out in any tongue unto the world at large.

The wisdom of the Self is ecstatic in enjoyment, perennial in glory, unlimited in space, infinite in time, and causeless in causation. It is the Majesty of Existence-Intelligence-Ecstasy (Being-Brightness-Bliss).

PARADOX IN PARADISE

(Indra's Court)

SUBRAHMANYA BHARATI

Servant : God of Gods !
Indra : Tell.
Servant : Narada is waiting outside.
He wants to see your Excellency !
Indra : Let him enter.
Narada (enters singing) :
'Narayan, Narayan, Hari, Hari
Narayan, Narayan'.
Indra : Narada, where's Narayan ?
Narada : Haven't you seen him ?
Indra : I haven't.
Narada : He's in all the elements.
Indra : Is he in Hell ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Is he in suffering ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Is he in death ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : What is the venture of your all-Narayan philosophy ?
Narada : All the things
All the worlds
All the states
All the qualities
All the powers —
are all equal to each other.
Indra : Are you and the ass equal ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Are ambrosia and poison equal ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Are *Asuras* and gods equal ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Are knowledge and nescience equal ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : Are pleasure and pain equal ?
Narada : Yes.
Indra : How is it ?
Narada : Lord Vishnu is all-pervasive —
(sings)
Narayan, Narayan,Narayan,
Narayan.

—*Translated from Tamil by* R. S. MURTI.

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REVEALED KNOWLEDGE

Rigveda X. 71 — Metre : Trishtubh except 9, Jagati

Rishi : Brihaspati of the family of Angiras

Lord of our prayer ! the first of Speech, and the foremost,
which sages uttered, giving *the unnamed* a name,
And which was their best and their most stainless,
revealed with love the Divine Secret in their soul. (1)

Where the sages formed the Speech with their mind,
straining it like flour with the sieve,
Therein have friends discovered their friendships
whose holy beauty lay hidden in the Speech. (2)

With worship they followed the steps of the Speech
and found it established within the sages ;
They acquired it and gave it at many places,
and seven singers intone it together. (3)

There is the man who sees but has not seen Vāc,
there is the man who hears but has not heard her,
But to another she reveals her graceful form
as the well-robed, loving wife does hers to her husband. (4)

There's the man described as thick-set and swollen
in friendship, whom none will urge to contests.
He wanders with an illusion that is barren
and the Speech he learns bears no fruit or blossom. (5)

For one deserting a friend who knows the truth
there is no grace even in the holy Speech ;
What he hears he hears amiss, and surely,
he does not know the path of righteousness. (6)

Friends who are well endowed with sight and hearing
are unequal in the quickness of their mind ;
Some look like pools that reach to the mouth or armpit,
and some like lakes in which a man can bathe. (7)

When with mental impulse shaped by the spirit
Brahmana friends perform the rites together,
Some are left behind with much they need to know
while others move forward, ranked as adepts. (8)

Those who go neither backward nor forward and are
neither Brahmanas nor performers at libations,
They, the inept ones, sinfully possess the Speech
and stretch it out as a weaver does the thread. (9)

All are delighted with the friend who comes
crowned with fame, a victor in the assembly.
He wards off their sin, wins for them nurture,
and is ever ready to face the contest. (10)

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One draws his strength from the power of the verses,
one sings the song in the seven-footed metre,
The adept in holy lore speaks of knowledge of all things,
and another lays down the rules of ritual. (11)

— *Translated by* ABINASH CHANDRA BOSE.

NOTES :—

The revealed knowledge (*jnāna*) makes the Veda (knowledge, from *vid*, to know). The Vedic revelation is the unfolding of the Divine Secret within the souls of sages who give it expression out of love (*preman*) for mankind. Naturally it forms the basis of friendship among men (Sts. 1-2). The Veda is carried in the mind (through the oral tradition) and is learnt from the sages by others (who come to be known as Veda-knowers — *brāhmanas*) and given to the people through the medium of ritualistic worship (*yajna*) (St. 3). The meaning of the Veda is found not physically (or intellectually) but intuitively and spiritually (St. 4). The Veda-knowers differ in quality and aptitude; some are complaisant and uncreative (St. 5), some are found lacking in true fellowship (St. 6), some are great, some mediocre (St. 7), some stop with the mere ritual, some proceed to spiritual enlightenment (St. 8), some are altogether unfit to handle the Veda (St. 9) and there is the ideal man who establishes his superiority in competitions and becomes a worker for his people's spiritual and material welfare (St. 10). The Veda is of four types — one consisting of verses (Rigveda), another of songs (Samaveda), a third dealing with sciences (*vidyā*), including spiritual science, *Brahmavidyā* (Atharvaveda) and a fourth concerned with ritualistic worship (Yajurveda) (St. 11).

This Vedic hymn lays down in clear terms and in a finely critical manner, the basic concept of spiritual revelation, the mode of its transmission, and the correct way of approach to its meaning. As such it is a most valuable spiritual document. This Vedic revelation has inspired people in the long after-ages and drawn them to the spiritual life. Sages in the later Vedas turn back to it with deep reverence, e.g. in the following Atharvaveda verse (VII. 61. 1) :

Since, Agni, we through *tapas* are
kindling the fire of the spirit,
May we be dear to the Veda,
long-lived and bright in intellect.

Elsewhere the A.V. prays : 'May that spiritual power come to us again' (VII. 66). This means that the sages believed that the spiritual experience of the revelation might be repeated by producing the necessary spiritual fitness. Rājayoga has given a practical shape to this belief. Sages and saints in all ages including our own have shown how the words of the Veda can be made to 'bear fruit and blossom' (St. 5).

The sages who revealed the Veda have been called here *dhīrāh* (St. 2), men in whom *dhī*, the intellectual-spiritual power, has been fully developed (Cf. '*sthita-dhī*', men of established *dhī* of the *Bhagavad Gita*). They are not claimed to have been singled out as special favourites of the Deity, nor have they given any particular name to their followers. They have used the simple word *Vāc*, Speech, for the great sacred literature they have left for man. A Yajurveda sage refers to this *Vāc* as *kalyani*, blissful, and wishes to speak it to his 'own men and to the stranger', the former signifying 'the masses of the people' (*jana*) (Y.V. Vs.). An Atharvaveda sage prays to be endowed with the sweetness of honey to be able to speak 'the glorious Speech' (*bhargasvatīm vācam*) to the masses of people (*jana*) (A.V. VI. 69. 2; IX. 1. 19).

STANZA 1 : *Lord of prayer* — Brihaspati. *The Divine Secret* — *Tad guhā-nihitam*, a symbolic term (lit. 'hidden in the cave' of the heart).

STANZA 3 : *Seven-singers* — the seven sages (Saptarshi). Sayana thinks they refer to the seven chief Vedic metres.

STANZA 4 : *the loving wife* — The simile shows the high regard of the Veda for domestic life and for woman.

STANZA 5 : *contests* — among poets and reciters of the Veda (See St. 10).

STANZA 10 : The assembly (*sabhā*) was the centre of Vedic society. It was a platform for all cultural as well as political and religious activities.

STANZA 11 : *seven-footed* — refers to the number of feet in 'the Śakvari metre' mentioned in the hymn. This metre is, however, only suggestive of the Vedic music. Actually it is rarely used.

It should be noted that the Rigveda recognises the three other Vedas and their approach to spiritual life. Prayer may be through chanting, through singing, through rituals. Spiritual life may also mean the pursuit in the spiritual way of the different *vidyās* or sciences, including the supreme *vidyā* of all — Brahmavidyā (or Adhyātma-vidyā, as the *Bhagavad Gita* calls it).

In ritualistic worship the four types were represented by four chief priests — the Hotri, invoking the Deity through verses; the Udgātri, using *Samaveda* songs; the Adhvaryu, who looked after the technical side of the ritual, and the Brahman, who supervised the ritual as a whole.

There are other hymns in the Veda which reveal the Divine Mystery, e.g. the Yajurvedic hymn containing the following lines in which the symbolic term *guhanihita* of St. 1 above has been used :

The loving sage (Vena) beholds that (*Tat*) mysterious Being (*nihitam guhāsat*) in whom the universe finds a single home (Y.V. Vs. 32. 8).

It is interesting to note that the oral tradition of the Veda has remained intact to this day through its transmission from father to son and teacher to pupil.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF THE BHAGAVATPAADAS OR 'VIJAYAS'

U. VENKATAKRISHNA RAO

Every Indian has heard the name of Vedavyasa. It can be safely asserted that all the religious sects current in India today must have been promulgated by him. The fountain-springs of our Vedanta Philosophy are the Vedas, Brahmasutras and the Bhagavad Gita; the first of these is revered as *Apaurusheya* or having no human author, but Vedavyasa is also revered as God's incarnation and like Sri Krishna of the Gita, He also is revered as 'Vedantakrit' and 'Vedavid'. These Vedas were a miscellaneous mass in the very beginning, and it was this Vyasa who re-arranged them according to their use in the various sacrifies as Rik, Yajus, Saaman and Atharva. He was called Vedavyasa for this very reason and clarified the meaning of the Vedas by composing the Vedanta, Brahmasutras. As regards the Bhagavad Gita, it was first a conversation between Arjuna and the Lord, but Vyasa it was who was able to hear it and record it for our welfare. This has been indicated by Adi Sankara in the beginning of his commentary on the Gita. There is an orthodox tradition among us that a religious 'darshana' can be established by an Acharya if only he is able to comment on these fountain-springs of Vedanta philosophy. Such a 'darshana' alone can elevate us and lead us to Saakshaatkaara or realisation of God. So it is a plain fact that the Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva could be entitled to be revered as '*Bhagavadpaadas*' only through Vedavyasa's grace.

These Jagadgurus, the Paramahamsas presiding over these mathas established by the great Acharyas long ago (which were first meant to be universities permeating the message of these Acharyas) derive their sanctity from Vedavyasa, their primal or parama guru. The full moon of the Aashaadha or the fourth month of the lunar calendar is revered as the day of His Incarnation and on this day, all our mathaadhipatis worship Vyasa specially. This month again heralds the rainy season almost throughout India (except perhaps in Madras) and these rains continue to be heavy for four months, necessitating the termination of martial or similar activities. That was why military operations were suspended and similarly movements of the religious heads had also to be suspended then. Hence arose the 'Chaaturmaasya' institution, when these Acharyas stayed only at one place preaching and spreading the message of Vyasa for four months. This 'four months' has later been curtailed into 'four fortnights' and it is interesting to note that all our Acharyas of the South, be they followers of Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva, observe this custom and remain for two months in one place, brooding over the message of Vyasa. This Vyasa's service to humanity can never be adequately assessed since He is also the author of our Mahabharata the largest epic in the world, 'being eight times as large as the Iliad and the Odyssey put together'. He is also the author of our eighteen puranas and as many upapuranas. Our tradition is that He is one of the seven 'chiranjivins', ever wandering restlessly as the people whom He exhorts to righteousness heed him not and are ever devoted to irreligion!

ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति माम् ।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते ॥

Madhva proclaims him to be the Guru of all gurus and the source of all Shastras —

गुरुः गुरूणां प्रभवः शास्त्राणां बादरायणः ।

As we, lay disciples of the various Mathas, recognise the heads of these religious sects as divine, we also believe that the moment they

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are ordained into this exalted office, their previous status in life is to be forgotten. They are forbidden by rule to think of their previous family connections and they come into a new religious 'estate' altogether. They are referred to as '*Kara-Kamala-Sanjaata*' or born of the lotus hand of their predecessor in office and must look up to him alone as their father or guru. We all look up to such religious leaders as 'sparks from the anvil' of Vedavyasa and slowly the custom of according even royal honours to them, '*Purnakumbhams*' and other civic honours, has become universal. The moment they come to our village, the elders of the village throng before them, welcome them and invite them to honour their respective homes and sanctify them by their holy tread. Their 'coming' was accorded a dignified name and called 'Vijaya' and even 'Digvijaya' or universal conquest, as they actually conquer our hearts by their enrapturing speeches.

Such 'Vijayas' were later assembled together by their sincere devotees and put together into book form. Perhaps the first of such Vijayas was the Madhva-vijaya composed by Trivikrama Pandita's son Narayana Pandita. This Trivikrama was at first an Advaitin who waged a battle royal with Madhva, only to be defeated by him. Madhva lived a long life of 79 years and it stands to reason that this Narayana had also occasion to meet the master and even live for a while under his shadow in the company of his father. The father Trivikrama was the author of a Mahakavya *Ushaaharana* and the son also followed faithfully in the footsteps of his father by making the religious preceptor Madhva himself his hero. This Madhva-vijaya itself is also a Mahakavya, styling itself *Aanandaanka* as the last verse in each of its sixteen cantos, contains the word Ananda. All the eighteen topics postulated for such Mahakavyas by the literary critics like Dandin are abundantly described. Two dates, 1199 or 1238 A.D. are assigned to Madhva's birth; whichever might be correct, this Narayana Pandita could be regarded as having been about 40 years younger than the Acharya himself and could be assigned to the end of the 13th century. The description of Vedavyasa (in the seventh sarga from verses 26 to 47) whom Madhva visits to take lessons from Him is really superb. The latter pays a tribute to Madhva for having understood His 'Hridaya' or heart correctly. Such minor eulogies are quite natural for those belonging to their own sect, but no impartial critic can deny the overall picture that has been preserved of the Master seen with his own eyes. (Similarly an *Anu-Madhva-Charita* is attributed to Hrishikesa Tirtha, a direct disciple of Sri Madhva ordained by himself.)

To have one's life recorded with loving devotion almost incident by incident, by a devoted disciple is really a fortune and the full implication of such a fortune can be realised only by those who have read Boswell's *Life of Johnson* in English. Among our three Acharyas, Madhva alone has had this unique privilege. Unfortunately the date of the Adi Shankara Bhagavatpaada has not been finally settled. The records of the Sringeri Matha, which should be regarded as authoritative, put the date of his birth as 43 B.C., while Western critics like Vincent Smith, believe that the Acharya was born in 788 A.D. and lived till 820. That he lived only 32 years is almost universally accepted (though one actually asserts that he lived 83 years); but the late Lokamanya Tilak, the author of the monumental commentary on the Gita called Gitarahasya, put the date back exactly by 100 years, believing that the prophet was born in 688 A.D. Justice Telang carried the date back by another 200 years, while Dr Bhandarkar assigned him to about the 3rd century A.D. Such differences of opinion exist among critics, but one thing is certain that all the 'Vijayas' or biographies are written only after the 14th century A.D. The most famous of such Vijayas is by Vidyaranya Madhava, who could easily be described as the founder of the 'never-to-be-forgotten' Vijayanagara Empire. It was on his inspiration that the empire was founded by Bukka, and the revered saint continued to guide the destinies of the empire

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even under Harihara. This saint sanctified the earth for 83 years and died in 1387. He was also the ordained head of the Sringeri Matha. This Vijaya and the 'Praachina Shankara Vijaya' by Anandagiri are printed. The latter has been printed in the Bibliothica Indica series. The rest, which are hereunder listed, seem to be in manuscript form in the Oriental Manuscripts Library in Madras. Their names are: (1) Chidvilasa's Shankara Vijaya (XXI 8145 number given in the Library), (2) Anantaanandagiri's Guru Vijaya, (3) Rajachudamani Dikshitha's Shankaraabhyudaya, (4) Vallisahaaya's Shankara Vijaya, (5) Sadaananda's Shankaradigvijayasara, (6) Govindanaatha's Keraleeya Shankaravijaya. We might add that Madhava Vidyaranya's Shankaravijaya has also been condensed and published from Bombay with Dhanapati's commentary. (I have taken this information from the late Dr Krishnamacharya's History of Samskrit Literature.) This Vidyaranya describes himself as Nava Kalidasa (I. 9) —

प्रौढोऽयं नवकालिदासकवितासन्तानसंतानको दद्य दद्या
समुद्यत: सुमनसामोदपारंपरीं

and the style is as superb.[1]

Turning to the Vijayas under Bhagavad Ramanuja, we find that they have not composed any Vijayas as such. But in their own peculiar *Manipravala* style (some words in Tamil and others in Samskrit in the same sentence) they have recorded the history of their saints, but all these seem to be only later than the 14th or 15th century, though their Acharya lived from 1017 to 1137 A.D. Ramanuja was respectfully referred to as *Wodeyavar* by his disciples and we are informed that a *Wodeyavar Charitram* in half Tamil and half Samskrit exists. We also have other very small poetical biographies of this saint who lived 120 years. His own disciple Andhrapurna (*Vatukanambi,* it seems was his Tamil name) composed 114 slokas in praise of his master and entitled it *Yatiraja-Vaibhava.* Another great saint of this sect, Vedāntadesika (1268-1379) has composed 70 slokas under the style *Yatiraaja Saptati.*

Though these disciples might not have composed poems entitled Vijayas, the history of this great saint is recorded in *Champu* or prose-cum-poetry style by another poet named Ramanujadaasa. This latter poet lived in about 1600 A.D. as recorded by the late Prof. P. P. S. Sastry, the then curator of the Oriental MSS. Library, in his introduction to the work edited by Pandit V. Krishnamacharya. The book is divided into ten stabakas or chapters and is available from the Library. We cannot assert whether this author had seen the *Vyasayogi charitam* composed in a similar champu or prose-cum-poetry style by Somanatha in about 1535 from the Kannada country. This saint Vyasayogi (1446-1539) was exactly like Vidyaranya Madhava about two centuries prior, the guardian saint of the Vijayanagar Empire and Somanatha, himself an Advaitin, actually records that he lived 'under the shadow of the Master', read his Champu-kavya before the saint and was honoured by him also.

The fact that such Vijayas are being written even today and are popular with us is proved by the fact that one such entitled *Raghavendra Vijaya* in eight cantos was published only recently in 1958 from Nanjanagud, Mysore state. This saint was ordained in 1545 and died in 1593. Though this was published recently, it was written by the nephew of the saint himself, one Narayanacharya by name. Maadhvas rever this holy Pontiff of the Raghavendra Mutt (the Mutt itself has been named after him now) as the incarnation of Prahlada and his commentary *Parimala* on the *Nyayasudha* is a Madhva classic. His *Vrindaavana* or shrine in Mancholi village, Adoni Taluk, Bellary District, is worshipped even today by non-Madhva devotees also. Some blind people have had their eyesight restored, and many similar miracles are recorded. Shuddhad-

[1] One such line (I. 4) describes Vishnu living in the Milky ocean eagerly desiring birth in a cowshed to taste sweeter milk! —

क्षीराब्धिवासी सरसीरुहाक्ष: क्षीरं पुन: किं चकमे न गोष्ठे ।

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vaita Vallabha cult glorifying Pushti bhakti started by Vallabha (1481-1533 A.D.) has also Vallabha-vijaya by one Jadunath Maharaj.

Such is in brief a resume of the Vijayas or historical biographies of the religious saints. We, their followers, must read them and profit and elevate ourselves by their example and precept as Longfellow advises us :

> Lives of great men all remind us,
> We can make our lives sublime
> And departing leave behind us,
> Footprints on the sands of time.

SANATKUMARA'S INSTRUCTION TO NARADA

M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

Narada approached Sanatkumara for instruction regarding the Highest. He could not have gone to a more competent teacher. Sanatkumara is one of the four mind-born sons of Brahma, the other three being Sanaka, Sanandana and Sanatana. These four sons of Brahma sat at the feet of Sri Dakshinamurti and imbibed the lesson that he taught by his silence. It was a strange spectacle. The teacher was a youth, a boy in his teens, while the disciples were grown-up, elderly men. The teacher taught by silence, never once opening his mouth, but the doubts of the disciples were all set at rest and they rose from the session perfectly satisfied. Only disciples of the very highest order can benefit by such instruction. Sanatkumara, therefore, was a highly qualified teacher. Narada, being a devarshi, knew whom to approach and he betook himself to the right sort of Guru.

Before imparting the instruction, it is the practice of teachers to ascertain the competency of their disciples. They are asked to stay for some time so that the teacher might have occasion to observe them at close quarters and form their own opinion about the fitness of the disciple to receive the highest teaching. Sage Pippalada asked the six students who waited on him to stay with him for one year ; Prajapati made Indra do probation for one hundred and one years before imparting the ultimate Truth to him. Narada, however, was not asked to wait for any length of time. He was only asked to state what he had learnt so far. In reply Narada gave a long list of the sciences he had mastered, beginning with the Rig Veda and ending with the science of the celestials (*Deva-jana-vidya*). In between these two Narada mentions seventeen other branches of learning including the three other Vedas as well as the Itihasas and Puranas which are spoken of as the fifth Veda. Incidentally we get to know the range and the variety of ancient learning.

All this mass of learning however did not bring the enlightenment that takes a man beyond sorrow. Narada realised that all his weight of learning was of no use as it did not bring him true inward happiness. 'I have heard from great men like you,' said Narada, 'that only those who know the Highest Self overcome sorrow and pain. Please help me to attain that state.'

Realising that Narada was a fit disciple and qualified in every way to receive the instruction, Sanatkumara began by characterising all that he had learnt so far as mere 'name'. The idea is that Narada had mastered only the ritualistic portion of the Vedas. Rituals, however important they may be, are incapable of leading to knowledge of Brahman. It is a far-cry from mere mantras which deal with rituals to the highest sakshatkara which furnishes direct and immediate experience of the unity of the Self. The disciple had therefore to be led by stages from what he knew to what he did not know. Gradualness of instruction is a characteristic feature of the Upanishadic method of teaching. We have other examples of graded instruction in the Taittiriya, Chan-

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dogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads. Varuna's instruction to his son in the Bhrigu-valli of the Taittiriya is of this gradual nature as also Prajapati's teaching to Indra in the eighth chapter of the Chandogya. When King Janaka asks Yajnavalkya 'What serves as light for man', the latter takes his royal pupil by stages to the Highest Atman which is the never failing light.

In the present case the steps are too many and even tiresome. Broadly speaking they fall into three groups, psychical, physical and psycho-physical. In the first group we have seven steps, name, the organ of speech, mind, will, intelligence, contemplation, and learning, *nāma, vāk, manah, samkalpah, cittam, dhyānam, vijnānam.* The second group comprises five steps, strength, food, water, fire and akasa, *balam, annam, āpah, agni, ākāsa.* The third group includes three psycho-physical entities, memory *(smara)*, hope (*āsā*) and spirit *(prāna)*. It is difficult to indicate the transition from one step to another in a strictly logical or scientific manner. Indeed it is a futile attempt to seek to provide a scientific basis for these steps in terms of modern Psychology or Physiology or both. They are frequently overlapping and seem to imply distinctions without a difference. The chief aim of the teacher seems to be to take the pupil from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar, from the gross to the subtle, from the material to the spiritual, from the region of the intellect where the distinction of subject and object, knower and known is strongly in evidence to the region of the Spirit when all distinctions are overcome and transcended. Close observation will show that there is a gradual blending of subject and object till finally both are merged in the Infinite which is termed Bhuman. It is also possible to show that every later entity is the cause of what precedes it. Cause is wider and more inclusive than effect. It is therefore a two-pronged movement. As the series advances we get not merely more and more comprehensive concepts but also a lessening of the diversity that is so characteristic of the earlier stages of our experience. The more inclusive our experience, the less is it based on distinctions. This appears to be the truth underlying the tedious movement of thought starting with name and ending with spirit. We have also to remember that these steps are spoken of as so many supports to meditation. We are told that he who meditates on name or the organ of speech or mind is able to move about freely in that particular region. In every case a certain reward is mentioned as the fruit of the meditation. It may be that as stages in meditative exercise they exhibit a connection which does not lend itself to scientific or logical analysis. As symbols of Brahman probably they have inner affinities which are not quite apparent for observation from without.

The student who has imbibed the instruction imparted so far, becomes an Ativādi, one who talks above the common level. The realisation that everything is fastened on all sides to spirit which is all-pervading, extending to the interior and exterior of things, naturally carries the conversation to the sphere of the transcendent. So long as we relate things as cause and effect, for example, that strength depends on food, food on water, water on fire and fire on akasa, we remain at the empirical level, the level of common experience. Once we rise above the sphere of cause and effect and seek to show the central unity to which the whole universe is bound we go beyond ordinary experience and begin to 'talk high'.

The 'high talker' is chiefly concerned with truth. Truth is based on knowledge, knowledge on thought, thought on faith, faith on certainty, certainty on action and action on pleasure. Pleasure consists in rising above all limitations. In the same Upanishad it is said elsewhere (IV. 10. 5) 'Pleasure is Brahman, the Ether is Brahman' (*kam Brahma kham Brahma*). The Upanishad goes on to add 'What is ka is kha and what is kha is ka'. By identifying the two, the Upanishad suggests that pleasure is unlimited. Pleasure is not of the ordinary variety which arises from the contact of the sense-organ with the object.

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Such pleasures are short-lived. Similarly kha or akasa is not the ordinary ether which, being one of the elements, is inanimate. The object in combining the two is to show that their limitations fall away and that a new entity, going beyond both, emerges. When two concepts are integrated into a high synthesis, the resulting knowledge is not a mere summation of the old notions but something radically new. The process is not a mere addition but a total transformation.

The 'high talker' who begins by pursuing the truth goes through a further course of discipline which brings him to unlimited pleasure. Truth and bliss are identical. Sat, Chit and Ananda merge and give rise to unlimited happiness. This is called Bhuman in the discourse we are considering. The greatness of this final teaching impresses us in strange contrast to the lower steps by which we ascend to it.

Bhuman is defined as that 'wherein one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and understands nothing else'.

यत्र नान्यत् पश्यति, नान्यत् श्रृणोति, नान्यत् विजानाति.

This description reminds us of Yajnavalkya's famous statement: 'When to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what one should smell and through what, what should one see and through what' and so forth. Yajnavalkya concludes his discourse to his wife by asking: 'Through what should one know that owing to which all this is known? O Maitreyi, through what should one know the knower?'[1]

Ordinary knowledge implies the distinction between knower and known, between subject and object. At this stage the knower is conscious of the 'other'. 'When there is duality, as it were, then one smells something else, sees something else' and so forth. This is the realm of the finite, what Sanatkumara calls 'alpam'. It is the sphere where distinctions are rampant.

[1] Swami Madhavananda's translation of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (II. iv. 14).

The Bhuman, on the other hand, rises clean above this relative sphere and annuls all distinctions. It is the Highest Reality known to the Upanishads. It is remarkable that Yajnavalkya and Sanatkumara speak in identical terms about this highest reality. This is no matter for surprise. Truth is the same to all seers. Sri Sankara's oft-repeated statement is that Truth is *vastu-tantra* and not *buddhi-tantra*, not even *codanā-tantra*. That is why mystics, belonging to different ages and different climes, have spoken in identical terms about the Supreme Reality. The full revelation of the Highest must be the same to all gifted seers. At a lower level it is possible that different aspects may be perceived by different seekers and all of them may not agree. It is also well known that those who are groping in the dark speak differently and contradict each other.

The Bhuman is without a second in the strictest sense of the term. There is nothing to limit it either from without or from within. It is the sole reality and is therefore all-pervasive. It is below, above, behind, before, to the right and to the left. The individual self or jiva is nothing different from the Bhuman. This identification of the jiva with the Bhuman serves two purposes: for one thing, it establishes the absoluteness of the Absolute beyond a shadow of doubt, and, for another, it removes all uncertainty regarding the existence of the Bhuman. In spite of its grandeur and sublimity, the existence of the Highest is liable to doubt as it is external to us. But once it is identified with man's inmost self, the possibility of doubt completely vanishes and it becomes a direct and immediate experience. One may doubt anything else, but not one's own self.

It follows that the Bhuman is not dependent on anything outside of itself for its greatness. It is majestic in its own right. Since it is not made up of parts it knows no decay and hence it is immortal. Since it excludes all difference, internal as well as external, there is no possibility of tension or discord in it and hence it is bliss all compact. One who is well

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established in it loses all sense of difference and finds delight in his own Self. He is *ātma-rati, ātmakrida* and *ātma-mithuna.* He becomes a *Svarāt,* a self-sovereign and is a law unto himself. He is not bound by the customs and conventions which bind other people. This absolute freedom to do what one likes irrespective of rules and regulations is the high-water mark of Brahman-realisation. Not that the *Jivanmukta* will transgress the moral code and do what is reprehensible. It only means that instinctively he will do what is right. Correctness of conduct will come as easy to him as breathing to us. He will be a living example of *nishkama-karma.* All thought of 'mine and thine' will have completely faded out and whatever he does will be purely in the interests of the common man. Spontaneously and in a spirit of pure compassion he will lend a helping hand to his less fortunate brethren.

Sanatkumara concludes the instruction by emphasising the importance of a strong memory which alone can bring about the destruction of all bonds. A strong and firm memory arises from the purity of our inner nature which, in its turn, depends on the disinterested pursuit of truth, free from love, hate and delusion. 'Without a constant recollection', writes Aldous Huxley, 'there can be no complete deliverance.'

Cleansed of all his impurities Narada attained the state beyond darkness and sorrow.

PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF KESHAV CHANDRA

BRAHMACHARI CHANDAN

In tracing the history of religious movements that have sprung up in the world from time to time, it has always been found, that the lives of the religious personalities possess a living significance for sustenance of the faith which is a revelation of the realisation of the exalted lives. The domination of a religion depends as much upon the environment as the sublimity of spiritual lives. It is because the environment accepts and succumbs to the godly man, his ideals and creeds that a religion reverberates with life and vigour — that it is seen to grow and nourish in due course. Keshav Chandra Sen, a pioneer in the socio-religious field of the nineteenth century, stood as the centralising and directing force of the Brahmo Samaj movement — a creed founded by Raja Rammohan Roy in the very early part of the nineteenth century. The necessary growth of Brahmo Samaj movement at the hand of some subsequent followers of Raja Rammohan Roy was dogmatic, narrow in outlook, uncompromising in its relation to others. In fact, in the early part of the nineteenth century having devoted its entire energy to intellectual polemic, it was becoming stagnant and belligerent. It was Keshav Chandra Sen who stood as the consolidator of the Brahmo Samaj movement so that whatever the latter owes for its appealing force, its refinement in thought and culture, its catholic outlook towards doctrines was due to the spiritual realisation of the former.

Keshav Chandra did not build up any system of philosophy independent of his religious ideas which he believed to be the revelation of the supreme power for the regeneration of India. All his lectures and discourses, especially the New Dispensation which proclaims the Brahmo movement to be a benediction of God upon earth are found replete with philosophical ideas. In fact his philosophical ideas are more theological than theoretical, more contemplative than argumentative. By dint of spiritual outlook he rushed over the abstruse problems with a true philosophical insight.

Different schools of philosophy, according to Keshav Chandra Sen, are nothing but the records of conflict as to the subordination or

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proclamation of the different realities. According to him, it is the trinity of real objects such as self, world and God that is the centre of main philosophical discussion. Some of the schools denying matter have plunged into the realm of idealism and pantheism, others again have taken shelter under the banner of scepticism and mysticism. All the barks and abuses in the philosophical world are due to the want of appeal to a proper court which he thinks to be common sense.

Keshav Chandra then proceeds to examine the three concepts found to be real. But on analysis it is argued that God is not as much real to us as mind and matter, self and world, of which one is directly felt and the other enjoyed. How then the idea of God comes to us? Here he does not resort to the age-old proofs for the existence of God, i.e. arguments from design and causation. The concept of 'God' proves God and in these two words, 'I am' there is a much deeper meaning which testifies one's presence. 'Our ideas of Divinity are not abstract and intellectual, but are based upon direct and intuitive knowledge. We see him as a present reality, a living Person. He whom we adore is not a logical Divinity but the living God, who makes himself visible and audible to the believer's soul.'

The God-vision of Keshav Chandra is removed equally from imagination and abstraction. The defect of speculative philosophy is that it analyses every concept, makes abstractions of attributes and cognizes them piecemeal. Similarly also the divine attributes such as wisdom, power, love, holiness are not apprehended except the ideas or thought processes. Such a procedure renders us not the living comprehensive whole but the fragments, the partial and the incomplete whole. As against it, his philosophy of spiritual life was involved in the principle of synthesis. Thus it is said:

> 'Bring all these broken units into one focus and you will see in this a beautiful, perfect and harmonious whole, the very living God of the universe. This is the God of all eternity, the God of the entire universe.'[1]

[1] Lecture — God vision in the nineteenth century, p. 404.

Doubts and discords have value no doubt but they fall within the domain of logic and metaphysics. A philosophy of God is nothing but an abstraction of it. It gives the fibre, not the kernel. But the infinite must be seen as it is, it must be realised. The abstractions are not false but these are to be blended in a harmonious whole, in a true synthetic unity. There is no doubt that science has aroused a great deal of confusion as to its aims and methods. But it is due to the misconception which is borne by many due to its outward phenomena. What does the science aim at? It is nothing but a striving after unity, an attempt to see the multifarious events as the manifestation of a principle. What is a scientific law? It is a unitary principle which regulates certain events or occurrences. The different principles or forces are found to be operating under one ultimate primitive force which regulates all the events. So whatever we say about science as discordant, multifarious, unsystematic are nothing but wrong notions taken from the external view of nature.

The conclusion of modern science reducing both matter and mind to a higher principle correlates with that of natural philosophy of Keshav Chandra. Just as the physical world and its events can be brought under one principal material cause, so also all the mental ideas are seen to be the manifestations of a higher cause which is supramental. The physical objects and mental ideas are connected in a chain of causation to God-force which is the first-cause or supreme principle. As Keshav Chandra says:

> 'In God-vision we see not a long causal chain, connecting objects and beings with a distant Divinity, through a series of causes, but a circle in which everything in creation is directly and immediately connected with the central force.'[2]

The world is just like a vast clock and God-force or the creator is said to be the pendulum. Eliminate God-force and there is an end of all things. Creation is explained not by a creative force only but by an enduring all-pervading power that keeps up this vast creation.

[2] Ibid., p. 417.

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Verily it is a single force which creates and preserves. The supreme power is said to be the store-house of energy which vibrates through objects and ideas.

> 'Neither is matter God nor is mind God but the Lord as the personal First cause dwelleth in all, animating the myriad forces in nature.'[3]

This world-energy or electricity, according to modern science, is the source of all phenomena in the universe, physical and mental. In heaven above and earth below and in ocean, in hill, it is the vital power which upholds and sustains everything. This mysterious primary force, underlying all forces in the cosmos, Keshav Chandra called God-force. It can be understood in three ways. The whole universe is like a gigantic machine when the huge dial is taken off from its face, the secret springs of the machinery which keeps the universe working will be visible. If the dial is put on again, nature is blocked from outside view. The motive power, the primary agent is lying hidden. It is revealed when the external barriers are removed.

Secondly, the explanation of the vitality of a banyan tree is found in its roots which draw materials from the soil and transmit them to its remotest parts for nourishment. So also the world is a big tree and the God-force supplies sap and strength to keep it up. Just as the little child is held fast to the mother's breast, so also the universe is held on the arms of the supreme Mother who is incessantly pouring the milk of life and strength to all its objects and beings. As it is quoted in one of his lectures :

> 'View the universe as a vast machinery, the Lord is the main spring. Regard it as a mighty tree, God is the root. Look upon it as a child, the Lord is the mother. It is science that enables us to realize our God.'[4]

In the truth of future life Keshav Chandra had a faith the clearness and distinctness of which amounted to direct vision. He never taught or tried to localize heaven and hell but the tremendous mystery of death was to him a darkness which he did not venture to penetrate. But, of the sublimity of heaven and freedom of salvation he had a positive foretaste. He spoke of the life immortal not with mere belief but with certain knowledge. He could not think of a better proof of immortality than the fact of God's existence. He who has faith in the living personal God has got also belief in the next world. The two doctrines are inseparably connected. In religion there can be no divinity without a world beyond, no immortality without a divinity. The soul feels that the life is in God and continues to be so. To say in Keshav Chandra's words :

> 'If there were no hereafter to supplement and perfect our life, God's wisdom, power, mercy and justice would all be gravely impugned and we would in fact have an imperfect and finite deity to adore and honour.'[5]

The spiritually minded people do not pray for heaven ; they aspire to live more and have their being in the Lord. To live day and night in the Lord, with thoughts, feelings and deeds is to them heaven. Heaven is not a thing to be achieved. The state when we feel about the Lord, is heaven just as at the time of prayer and communion man feels God in the very heart of his heart. In that sublime experience man steps into heaven indeed but he loses it as soon as he enters into worldly affairs. Keshav Chandra concludes his lecture by saying :

> 'Strive then my friends to realize this spiritual heavens as a present reality by living entirely in the spirit of God. Remember that he is a true believer who seeks no other heaven but God.'[6]

His theory of creation drawn from both Christian theology and Hindu mythology is directly linked with his theory of evolution. Creation comes not out of nothing as some of the schools propound, nor does it spring from material substance where purpose and design will be unexplicable. It is an emanation of that almighty word — Logos — which explains beauty, symmetry, harmony, order,

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 420.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 415.
[5] Lecture — Our faith and experiences, p. 261.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

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life and light. Creation was in the wisdom of God but took shape through the force of speech. It is a continuous unending process, evolution of creative force. The Hindu too accepts the Christian theory of Logos — a gradual development through the ever advancing stages of life. From crude materiality it rises into living animality, thence to graduated humanity and its perception. Man must conquer animality and enlighten his divinity within. It is philosophy which leads man to reason but religion pushes him higher too — in the divine world. As it is spoken :

> 'The highest evolution is regeneration — the destruction of the lower type of humanity and the evolution of a new species of godly humanity — life divine instead of life human.' [7]

His idea of divine holiness is not speculative but based on personal realization. He believed in the power of a divinity which strives to manifest itself through humanity, through individuals at large. That is why he had a positive conception not only of freedom from sin but even from possibility of sin. The mankind will come into one stage when all will be holy, all divine. Without waiting for transmigration into the other world he directly pointed to transformation as an instance how brute sensuality is changed into rational humanity, thence to holy divinity on earth.

[7] Lecture — Philosophy and madness in religion, p. 314.

COSMO-GENESIS IN THE GITA

S. N. RAO

The unseen and the unmanifest Nature is what the Gita calls *Prakriti*. When lighted up and animated by the enlivening presence of the All-Knowing and All-pervasive Supreme Spirit, that unseen and unmanifest Nature slowly emerges into the region of the manifest in multiple forms of size and variety. The result is the Universe we see around us, the Universe we live in. Our conception of the Supreme Spirit is *pure consciousness, consciousness standing by itself* in all-knowing Supreme Intelligence. We further conceive of It as unmeasurable in vastness, and hence all-pervasive and cosmic. *Prakriti* in this way becomes *Brahma* the Creator, the self-acting instrument as it were in the illuminating presence of that Cosmic Intelligence. It is immanent as well as transcendent, which terms can only mean all-pervasive, and hence cosmic. The Supreme Spirit Itself sits unconcerned and does not generally interfere with the moods and modes of self-acting Nature. Nature alone is therefore considered as solely responsible for both good and evil in this world. All Nature, including human nature works on the principle of *swabhava*, that is, according to the moods and modes, tempers and temperaments inherent in Nature itself, '*Swabhavastu pravartate*'. Nature repeats in different ways under different forms its processes of manifestation. Hence all created beings are said to be born again and again under the sway of *Prakriti*. That is how cosmo-genesis is said to operate in the immediate presence and under the auspices of Cosmic Consciousness (Gita, IX-8, 9 & 10). Cosmo-genesis in the Gita is an eternal and recurring cosmic process of origination, growth, decay and death.

When Nature repeats its methods of creative activity, it is not a repetition of sameness. It is not a repetition of identical beings, whether living or non-living, coming into existence again and again. There are always differences, vital differences between what had once come and gone and what are to come again and make their exit. Every incarnate entity, discarnating after a lapse of time, re-incarnates again at a different level, higher or lower than its previous existence. Incarnation is birth, discarnation is death and re-incarnation is re-birth. Such is the three-fold process in creation. That obviously is the reason why

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we are asked to be good and do good in this life so that we may go to higher and higher levels of existence. Those who are good and do good in every walk of life rise higher and higher, those who mix up good and evil on grounds of expediency and opportunism continue to stay in the middle, while those who are wholly evil sink deep and down to the lowest levels of existence (Gita, XIV-18).

If this view of Cosmo-genesis is correct, it is clear that the Universe has evolved in various stages and phases, because of inherent affinity existing between Matter and Spirit, bringing both together to build up all that is seen and unseen in the Universe. Every entity both moving and non-moving has its origin in the association between Matter and Spirit. In the language of the Gita, it is the result of conjunction between *Prakriti* and *Purusha,* between *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* (Chap. XIII-26). The English terms 'Body and Soul, Matter and Spirit,' and the Gita terms *Prakriti* and *Purusha, Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna,* are all one and the same in essence, the difference being the level at which we understand each one of them. There can be no conflict and there should be no hostility between the two, unless one denies and ignores its relation with the other. But what is Matter and what is Spirit? Are they opposite and alien to each other? If so, how can there be any association between the two? Nowhere in the Gita we are told that they are different and alien to each other. On the other hand, what the Gita says is that they are both *Anadi,* i.e. beginningless, and Sri Krishna repeatedly affirms '*Swam Prakriti*', '*Mama Maya*', indicating that there exists a close relationship between Matter and Spirit. Unless we arrive at an intelligible answer to the question, 'what is Matter and what is Spirit,' it is not possible to understand the nature of relationship between the two, and the nature of the urge that prompts them to associate together in conjunction and to cause the universe of things around us.

The great rationalist Earnest Heckel of the 19th Century called the Universe a riddle. In the 20th Century, Modern Science with all our Sputniks and Space Rockets has not advanced very much further. All that was hitherto considered as basic and fundamental in the structure of the Universe — *matter* — has given a crack when the atom was split, and the imagined structure itself has collapsed leaving the Universe still a riddle, when it is found that the atom is not an atom of Matter at all, but it is a surprisingly complex system of whirling forces of electrical charge rapidly revolving and rotating round a neutral charge. It is all motion and movement. *Energy* has ousted *matter* from its 19th Century pedestal. The Universe has become essentially vitalistic and has ceased to be materialistic. It has become a huge complex of vitalistic movements, vibrations and pulsations, a complex of energy movements in group formations of marvellous variety. It is all one Cosmic Energy in multiple forms and manifestations, giving each formation an appearance of materiality and substantiality, the cause being due to the presence of cohesive and adhesive qualities inherent in each formation. Every atom is a group of movements. Every molecule is also a group of movements. Every cell is a group of movements. Nothing is static, and nothing is a stand-still. Every one of us is a group of molecular and cellular movements. Such is the nature of the Universe, the nature by which we have been persuaded to believe as Matter. It is all appearance, but it is a factual appearance which no sane man can deny. All ultimate constituents like protons and electrons are mere forces or charges revolving round each other or flying away from each other. There is only one fundamental fact, the basic fact of the Universe, and that is Motion, Movement or Energy, by whatever name we call it. It is the Cosmic Energy of the Cosmic Lord. In this Cosmic movement, there is formation, grouping, arrangement of cosmic forces or energy movements at various levels in various shapes. At some levels and under suitable conditions, this cosmic movement gives an opportunity for what we call life to manifest itself. At still

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higher levels, there is mind, intelligence, with Consciousness as the basis for all the three. Our Universe is thus a mass of unending Energy-Potential in both manifest and unmanifest condition. What we see as gaseous, liquid and solid forms is the manifest condition of that Energy-Potential. In this picture, Matter as we have hitherto understood has lost its material content. Materiality is only an acquired quality, an appearance assumed by Cosmic Energy itself, in its cohesive and adhesive aspect. Neither the atom nor its nucleus is material. Our Universe is thus a coherent system of energy movements, a system of regulated forces in marvellous patterns and formations. As one Scientist of great imagination says : 'The Universe is one seething welter of motion (of cosmic forces) playing in space, playing in ether, playing in all living beings, playing therefore in ourselves. This eternal motion never ceases, is never created, it always exists.' This cosmic play is unthinkable without Intelligence at every point in the cosmic field.

What is the nature of that Intelligence posited at all points in cosmic space, posited as an essential background for every creative and evolutionary process ? It must be all-knowing and highly conscious Intelligence, supreme knowledge in all its fullness and totality, past, present and future. That must be the Divine ground, and the process is eternal ; it had no beginning, it has no end ; it never ceases, and it always exists. Looking at the marvels and mysteries of the Universe in which we are thrown, can we deny the presence of Cosmic Intelligence at all points in cosmic space ? Cosmic Intelligence presupposes a Cosmic Mind, intelligence being the functioning of the mind, and Cosmic Mind presupposes Cosmic Consciousness. Consciousness is the first, mind comes next and intelligence after. It is the same at the human level. So it should be at the Divine level. Just as the consciousness in the human pervades the entire human body, so also Cosmic Consciousness pervades the entire Cosmos (Gita, XIII-13). Every cell in the human body is a creative centre, a centre of creative activity. So also it must be in the Cosmos. Hence it follows that all centres of creative action in the universe of space are necessarily Centres of Cosmic Consciousness. They all create to destroy and destroy to create. All entities in the universe including our own bodies are structures built round these Centres of Cosmic Consciousness. It is from these Centres that Cosmo-genesis may be said to begin, if we insist upon having a beginning for our mental satisfaction. Each structure being a Matter-*cum*-Energy complex, cohesive and adhesive forces that have gone into the building of that structure gradually and necessarily work themselves out and begin to slacken by sheer efflux of time. When that happens, the centre of consciousness drops that structure altogether and proceeds as it were to build another. This dropping is what we call death of the body. The Centre of Consciousness itself never dies ; it is immortal, eternal and ever youthful ; it has no old age and no efflux of time. It is what the Gita calls *Amsa* or a point in the all-pervasiveness of Cosmic Consciousness. This *Amsa* is not a part, not a portion cut off or taken out from the Cosmic Consciousness, but just a point in the immeasurable vastness, in the all-pervasiveness of the Supreme Spirit, a point round which Dame Nature has been inspired to build a nest, a body with a variety of shapes and forms. Hence the whole universe, and every being or entity moving or non-moving, hangs on an un-numberable and unending series of Cosmic points in that immeasurable vastness (Gita, VII-7). Points or what I have called centres of all-pervasive Cosmic Consciousness thus run through all and every entity in the Universe. '*Mayi Sarvamidam Protam Sutre Manigana iva.*'

Such is the process of Cosmo-genesis presented to us in the Gita both for the living and the non-living, for the moving and the non-moving. In the case of the living we have what we call birth and death. In the case of non-living we have what we call integration and disintegration or evolution and dissolution. In the living there is movement visible. In

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the non-living the movement is invisible. Science tells us that there is molecular movement in all non-living matter. How can there be any unmoving in an incessantly moving Universe? Our Earth never remains stay-put even for a minute at the same point in Cosmic space. So is every star or planet. Life is existence and existence is life. It is all one perennial Stream of Existence. All entities in creation including every one of us must necessarily pass through this perennial stream. Birth and death, evolution and dissolution, integration and disintegration, whatever terms we use, are two trap-doors, as it were, in this unending Stream of Existence. One is the exit, and the other is the entrance. It may be called the Stream of Manifestation. That is the Cosmos, and that is the Universe itself. It is the realm of the Manifest emerging or evolving from the realm of the Unmanifest. Our Universe has not come out of a void or nothingness. The genesis of the manifested Cosmos lies in the unseen all-pervasiveness of Cosmic Consciousness, Itself remaining unmanifest but always causing manifestation (Gita, IX-8). All that exists always exists, and never ceases to be. Every time an existence emerges, it is a new development from the old, may be a rise and may be a fall. It is existence just the same, but not a blind repetition of the old.

At the human level, the *Amsa* or the point in Cosmic Consciousness round which a body is built, develops certain dominant characteristics. It becomes self-conscious, forgets its Cosmic nature and its sense of universality, develops egoity (*Ahankara*) and a sense of individuation, a sense of differentiation and separateness, evolves a mind which attracts and in turn is attracted by the objects good and bad from the environment in which it is placed. All creation is undoubtedly one of individuation and differentiation only. But at the human level, this sense of individuation is very much stronger and produces a strong desire for what the Gita calls '*Bhoktritwam*', a desire to experience the pleasures of the environment, and in consequence, it has to suffer the pains of the same environment. This environmental experience or what is called '*Bhoktritwam*' leaves strong impressions and tendencies, and the *Amsa* practically becomes an ego-self, an ego-soul, and loses its innate sovereignty and control over the environment which is its own make, its own machine. The human machine runs pell-mell as a consequence of loss of control, and finally dashes itself against the Tree of *Samsara*. The ego-soul thereupon drops the machine, i.e. discarnates its incarnate body. Compelled by the implanted past experiences, it reincarnates again and begins to build another body with all the acquired tendencies and impressions during its previous incarnate existence. This three-fold process of creative action at the human level is a purposive activity. It is not a meaningless repetition which is dubbed as *Samsara*, as an unending series of births and deaths. It is not unending. The Tree of *Samsara* is not a permanent fixture; it can be cut branch by branch and finally at its roots. That in fact is the end and aim of the three-fold process, the process of incarnating, discarnating and reincarnating, constituting a purposive development at the human level. The human soul has to reach higher and higher levels of human existence, higher and higher levels of human life, finally ending in Divine Life. This three-fold process is a cosmic process, a process of cosmic importance.

The Bhagavad-Gita is the best authority on Vedanta.

The reconciliation of the different paths of Dharma, and work without desire or attachment—these are the two special characteristics of the Gita.

— *Swami Vivekananda.*

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चरैवेति

SOME PRECIOUS CRUMBS

When the 'wisest man' from the West met the wisest of the East for the first time what happened we cannot know. Damis was not present. He never became 'an initiate', and he could only pick up such 'crumbs' as fall from the 'table',—i.e. when his master chose to say something to him.

Apollonius stayed about four months on the Holy Mount with Iarchas and his group. Probably it corresponded roughly to a kind of 'cāturmāsya'. One item of the recorded description is worth noting, viz., that the 'wise men' wore 'turbans' and a 'saffron-coloured over-mantle' that 'left one arm and shoulder bare.' That manner of wearing an upper cloth can be seen at most religious ceremonies in India even at the present day. Monks, and particularly those who belong to the Buddhist denomination, invariably dress in that way. In a footnote, Dr Schnur appropriately says: 'This is one of the many authentic touches in Philostratus' account not culled from earlier sources.'

Another interesting item is the mention of the way in which the 'wise men' greeted Apollonius. They are said to have shaken hands with him,—rather held his hands in theirs. Dr Schnur adds this pertinent remark: 'The significance of this un-Grecian form of salutation is clear: thus would initiate recognize initiate.' Apollonius was then 'invited to take his seat in their circle, as an equal.'

* * *

'Know thyself': This was a formula familiar to the Greeks. 'The temple of the Delphic Apollo, Apollonius' tutelary god' had that very motto inscribed on it. Naturally the first question asked by Apollonius was: 'Do you know yourselves?' It elicited the novel reply: 'Self-knowledge is but the first step in our wisdom; *because* we know ourselves we know all things.' Students of Indian scripture will easily see the connection: One who knows the True Self knows everything. In final illumination, one sees the Self in all, and all in the Self.

One common criticism that is levelled is that Philostratus 'relates of India nothing but doctrines and opinions that were current in Athens.' Dr Schnur refutes this criticism by referring to this very reply given by Iarchas. Says he: 'This answer (of Iarchas) is so opposed to current Greek philosophy that it is hard to see' how the criticism could be made at all.

The next stage in the conversation is believed to have been a question by Apollonius: 'What, then, are you?' The reply to it too was equally important: 'We are like gods, for we are good men.' To Apollonius this came as a 'confirmation of his Pythagorean quest.' Dr Schnur adds: 'Virtue enables man to imitate the Divine and become one with it; man had it in him to become, as Aristotle had said: "either beast or god." Later he (Apollonius) was to use this argument in his defence before Domitian', the Emperor.

Finally the discussion turned to transmigration of the soul,—the 'ancient Indian creed, according to which the soul passes through many bodies on its progressive stages of purification and advancement.' Pythagoreans had imbibed this doctrine 'from Eastern sources.' Here too, 'Apollonius found confirmation.'

The story says that after the 'secret' discussions were over, Damis and the others were admitted to the sacred areas,—to 'religious rites' and, of course, a 'subsequent banquet.'

भग चरैवेति। **SUBANDHU**

All the facts are taken from *Mystic Rebels*, pp. 35-37.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

'The teachings of St. Basil' has been taken from the San Francisco Vedanta Society Bulletin.

Sri N. K. Krishnamurti is from Madras.

Swami Chidbhavananda is President, Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam, Tiruchirapalli.

Swami Rajeswarananda is Editor, *Call Divine.*

Dr A. C. Bose is from New Delhi.

Prof. U. Venkatakrishna Rao is Professor of Sanskrit, Madras Christian College.

Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Iyer is a retired Professor of Philosophy of the Annamalai University.

Sri R. K. Murti is Lecturer, R. K. Mission Rural Institute, Coimbatore.

Br. Chandran is from the Ramakrishna Order.

Sri S. N. Rao of Ooty is a retired Deputy Collector.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Addressing the members of the Allahabad High Court Bar Association (on 23-10-60), President Dr Rajendra Prasad said that it was the emphasis on the rights which was responsible for all quarrels, not only between individuals but also between nations.

> It is insistence on what may be sought to get rather than insistence upon what you have to give to others, that has brought about the present-day quarrels in our society in political as well as other spheres and in other countries.
>
> The whole of our legal system at the present moment was a record of the definition of the rights in the Constitution. The Constitution did not lay down any fundamental duties but laid down fundamental rights of individuals, as if rights can exist by themselves and not duties.
>
> My own idea is that if duties are fulfilled the rights will take care of themselves. It is really the duties which require enforcement and which should be given a prominent position in our legal system as well as in our Constitution. But guided as we are by other constitutions and by other modes of thought, which we have taken from other countries, we have not been able to take that view. That is one of my regrets.
>
> There is hardly any department of life where duty does not require to be enforced. We see to-day any amount of indiscipline. I am not talking about indiscipline among students. I am talking about indiscipline generally and the general laxity in our way of doing things which arise from the fact that we do not fully realise the duties which we owe, if we are in service to our employers and if we are doing something by way of trade or commerce to other people. In that way in every walk of life, in every department of life, there is a certain amount of laxity and that laxity is due very largely to inadequate appreciation of our sense of duty to others. That is one of the defects in our Constitution which lays so much emphasis on our fundamental rights and hardly anything specifically about duties which we owe to one another. Even in such matters which is so obvious as the defence of the country there is no duty cast upon anyone in our Constitution.

These remarks of the President of India has evoked much discussion. Needless to say, there are points on both sides. But what makes this statement valuable is the times we are passing through. With the coming in of independence there is a great desire for the goods of life. But they can be achieved only when more wealth is produced. Wealth cannot be produced without increased labour. But in India the problem has taken a peculiar turn. The leaders of society and even a large number of the intelligentsia, and through them the masses, are conversant with the workings of economic and political organizations of the West. They know that the employers will not part with their money unless compelled. So the Trade Union movements have been recognized as a legitimate function, where the labour leaders try to force the hands of the employers to increase the emoluments. The more essential a service the greater is its demand and also its achievement. As a result, even Governments are

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affected, for their employees think of themselves only as employees. Of course, now there is an attempt to differentiate between Government and other jobs. Even for industrial, commercial and agricultural concerns the truth is dawning that the hen should not be sacrificed for the eggs. It is upon the production and business that the profit and increase of emoluments will depend. But all these years the stress was more on voicing the rights. So the tendency to bring pressure on the employers, Government or otherwise, persists. Along with legitimate methods, illegitimate ones of going slow, threat, etc. are also rampant. On the part of individuals too, a tendency to come forward by means other than hard work has gained ground. Hence the leaders are anxious that production which is the source of wealth, should not fall. The Western countries got a long time to develop the wealth and then shared it by stages. In recently freed countries, impoverished for centuries, this creation of wealth as well as proper distribution of it must go together. But the production is the first necessity. In this background if we read the statement of Dr Rajendra Prasad we shall realize its importance.

It is true, in the old Indian tradition the stress was more on duties and dharma. But rights followed automatically, when all concerned followed their dharma. However, from the individual standpoint it is more satisfying to take this idea of duty. As it is spiritually beneficial, the Gita says, 'To work you have the right, not to the fruits thereof.' About the satisfaction an individual can derive from this idea has been well said by Cecil : 'Duties are ours, events are God's. This removes an infinite burden from the shoulders of a miserable, tempted dying creature. On this consideration only can he securely lay down his head and close his eyes.'

But modern social consciousness of the rights of man, or the power of collective bargaining is too strong to be overlooked. It is a grand thing also. The obvious solution is samanvaya, a happy blending of the two. If we have preached too much of rights for all these years, let us balance it by shifting the stress on duties. The ultra-moderns need not think that this old idea of duty and selflessness are obscurantist, for even Prof. Laski has pointed out that the first term in the definition of rights is the limitation of desires. But in this atmosphere of assertion of rights, to bring into prominence the idea of duty is not easy. It can be done by the rod as in the totalitarian countries or it may be brought in fully in a spiritual scheme of life, where higher values play a more important part as a motive force.

OBITUARY : SWAMI NIRVIKARANANDA

We are sorry to announce the passing away of Swami Nirvikaranandaji, aged 68, at Saštamangalam Ashrama, Trivandrum.

On October 10, the Swami fell ill in the Nattayam hill Ashrama where he was staying. He was brought to the Ashrama Hospital at Sastamangalam. In spite of best medical care the Swami passed away at 6-10 p.m. on the 14th October. He was conscious throughout and had on his lips the names of God even at the last moment.

Swami Nirvikarananda had close connection with Tiruvalla Ashrama from his student life. He joined the same Ashrama in 1920. Initiated by Swami Nirmalandaji he had his Sannyasa also from him in 1923. He was a tireless and enthusiastic worker. It was under his supervision that the construction of the Ashrama buildings at Nattayam and Tiruvalla was carried out. He had been the Secretary of the Calicut Sevashrama for more than ten years. It was during this period that the above Sevashrama acquired its present site and building. For the last eight years the Swami was leading a retired life at Tiruvalla and Ponnampet Ashramas assisting of course the Swamis there. In the beginning of June this year the Swami came over from Ponnampet Ashrama to the Trivandrum hill centre where he was spending his days peacefully conducting Puja, meditation and prayer regularly. The Swami had a good circle of friends and was much loved for his spirit of service and other qualities of head and heart. May his soul rest in Peace.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

TRIPURA RAHASYA OR THE MYSTERY BEYOND THE TRINITY: By Sri Munagala S. Venkataramaiah, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India. Pages 224. Price Rs. 4.

'*Tripura Rahasya*' is an ancient work on the worship of the Divine Mother who is the Supreme Goddess governing the Cosmic process. She is variously named as Tripura, Lalita, Shodasi, Sri Vidya, Kameswari etc. in the Agamas relating to Sakti worship. She is called *Tripura* in as much as Her Body consists of three Saktis viz. *Brahmi, Vaishnavi, and Raudri*; and Tripurarahasya refers to the Supreme, albeit mysterious truth of Her Being that lies beyond the Trinity and transcends all limitations consequent on time and place.

The present work is an English Translation of the Second Canto of this work relating to *Jnana Khanda* or the Philosophy of Mother-worship.

The canto consists of twenty-two Chapters containing 6,687 verses in all and is in the form of a Dialogue between Dattatreya and Parasurama—and is presented by Haritayana, a close disciple of the latter, in the form of an Itihasa in response to Sage Narada's mandate.

In translating the original Sanskrit work into lucid, readable English, the learned author has done a unique service to seekers of Divine Knowledge who are interested in *Paramartha-Vichara* or enquiry into the Nature of the Ultimate Reality.

The Ultimate Reality, according to the Tantras, is *Chit-Sakti* from which the cosmic process springs. Adopting this metaphysical position of the Tantras, the work accords a measure of reality to the phenomenal world which is an expression of the Free Will of the Lord and is therefore spiritual in essence like the Lord himself. This view differs slightly but *sensibly* from the strictly Vedantic Doctrine of *Vivarta* which denies any second reality other than *Pure Chaitanya*. However, Vedantins who hold that Divine grace is *sine qua non* of self-realisation, will find the Gospel of Salvation expounded in the work most illuminating.

Of special value to seekers of Grace, are the chapters dealing with the ultimate problems of Bondage and Release that are discussed in parable form in the dialogues between Hemalekha and her husband Hemachuda. The gifted translator has done full justice to the spirit and substance of the discussions by explaining the delightful parable of Madame Ignorance and her goodly company, of Mr. Fool and Master Inconstant suitably to the comprehension of the reader.

Equally valuable, is the presentation of the dialogue between Mahasena and Munikumara regarding the status and appearance of the Universe as a projection of the Supreme Will behind Creation.

The concluding section dealing with the Samvada between Janaka and Ashtavakra is the crown of the whole teaching which purports to establish a synthesis between Sri Vidya as propounded in the Tantras and Brahmavidya as taught in the principal Upanishads.

Altogether, the Translation is a precious contribution to the extant literature in English on ancient Agamic philosophy and sure to engage the earnest attention of devotional minds interested in the search after the Light Divine.

K. PANCHAPAGESAN.

FOUNDATIONS OF TIBETAN MYSTICISM. According to the Esoteric Teachings of the Great Mantra Om Mani Padme Hum: By Lama Anagarika Govinda. (Rider & Company, 178-202, Great Portland Street, London, W. 1.) Price 30 s. Pages 311.

This is a very interesting book on Buddhistic Tantras as understood and practised in Tibet. The author of this book though born in Germany, belongs to the Tibetan Kargyupta Order. This book deals with the Tibetan Mysticism according to the esoteric teachings of the great Mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum*. The book is divided into five parts, the first four parts dealing with the first four words of this Mantra. In the preface the author tells us that his Guru Tomo Geshe Rinpoche left his remote mountain hermitage and revealed to the modern world the spiritual treasures hidden and preserved in Tibet for over thousand years. The author starts by ascribing to the various words of the Mantra great significance. Thus OM stands for the path of universality; MANI is the path of unification and of inner equality. PADMA stands for creative vision and the last word HUM is the path of integration. The basic tenet of the work is that words have a magic—a sacred power. While in every place the tradition of the mantras has almost died out, Tibet alone has succeeded in

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keeping alive mantric traditions up to the present day. Lama Govinda first discusses in detail the origin and universal character of the sacred syllable OM and interprets it as the experience of the infinite within us. He tells us that the Buddhists removed the cobwebs of theology which covered 'OM' in the Hindu tradition and made it the 'sacred arrow-head to be attached to the arrow of meditation.' The author takes great pains to prove that the development of the Buddhist science of mantras was not a 'relapse' into Brahmanic usages but a natural phase of spiritual growth.

In OM we experience universality, in MANI the luminosity of the immortal mind, in PADMA its unfoldment in the lotus-centres of consciousness and in HUM which is a bija syllable, its integration and realisation. The way to the realisation of OM is the way of universality, the way of realising the universal in the individual consciousness. The Lama gives us in detail the various ways in which this is achieved and we have no space to go into all these. All the technical terms of the tantra are carefully elucidated and the esoteric principles of the mantras are carefully explained. Especially in the discussion of the syllable HUM, the author discusses the complimentary values of OM and HUM, the doctrines of the cakras as in Hinduism and Buddhism, the Kundalini and the dakini, the inner fire in the Tibetan system of meditation, the Dhyani-Buddhas and other such allied topics which reveal to us his erudition and scholarship. The startling similarity of the Tibetan tantras with those of the Hindus is well seen in the course of the author's narration though he takes the trouble to caution us at every step that Buddhism did not borrow its tantras from the Hindus but that it was the other way. He recognises remarkable similarities between the Hindu and the Tibetan Tantras in phrases, technical terms, religious concepts and spiritual experiences but tells us that these similarities do not take away an iota from the Buddha's greatness and originality. In the last part the Lama discusses very interesting topics like Maya, the six realms of the samsaric world etc.

The book is profusely illustrated and these are a great help to understand the mystic tantras of the country. The photographs of Vairocana, Avalokiteswara, Amitabha and other Tibetan devas are very inspiring and enable us to visualise the deities of Tibetology. The book is beautifully got up and the author has spared no pains to make the book really useful. The Notes at the end of the book are very useful and especially the scholarly notes on Indian and Tibetan words add very much to the value of the book. The book is a classic in Tibetology.

S. R. SASTRI.

MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY: By R. K. Murti. Pp. 114. Price Rs. 10. Efficiency Publications, Bombay-19.

This is a welcome addition to the numerous books on business efficiency. Perhaps its chief merit, which distinguishes it from the other similar publications, is that it seeks to implant religion and religious ideas into factories and business organisations. The author pleads for the association of religious minded associates as employee-consultants, in industrial houses and for the managers 'top to bottom being true devotees of God,' who, in his view and experience, 'are always most efficient' (p. 39). As a corollary, 'our forgetfulness of God', he avers, 'has more to do with the inefficiency and deterioration than is imagined'. The 'managers', therefore, should 'practise love and devotion to God' (p. 85) and look upon their employees 'as His manifestations'.

The ideas set out in this book (pp. 94 to 99) are well worth careful appraisal and adoption.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Published by Advaita Ashrama, 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta-13. Pp. 552. Price Rs. 6.

This is a new selection of 229 letters of Swami Vivekananda culled from the Complete Works. These are the 'best and most representative letters dealing with topics of general interest'. All the inspiring letters written in different moods by Swamiji have been included here. In this new edition footnotes have been added introducing the persons mentioned in the body of letters. Brought out with a fine get-up the book will surely be a favourite with those seeking suitable books for presentation, especially to the young. One, however, feels that a smaller and cheaper edition of inspiring letters would be more attractive to the students.

T. S. RAGHAVAN

COMPREHENSIVE SPIRITUALITY: By Swami Avyaktananda. Pp. 16. (Price not stated). The Vedanta Movement, Batheston Villa, Bath Easton Bath, England.

This exquisitely produced brochure, sponsored by the Vedanta Movement in England, presents the 'indicia of comprehensive spirituality', which the author rightly equates with an intense calmness, a deep feeling of unity with all lives

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and all things and an intense activity for service. This concept is applied both to the society and the state with the result that family life is strengthened by the natural affection and equality between the sexes: the state yields place to an administrative body for the management of all affairs in a classless society without any governing group; and the church becomes a free association of people on the basis of freedom of conscience, for cultivating tranquillity, unity, love and service in an international order, promoting the fellowship of all faiths.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

GLIMPSES OF REALITY: By A. R. I. Shaik Biyabani. Published by the Author, Dy. Supdt. of Police, Poona. 2. Pages 66. Price Rs. 2.

The book under review is an excellent work of a truly religious person. Although one may expect a lot of philosophical discussions about Reality, the book contains very interesting and useful aspects of our everyday life. A very useful book, indeed, well printed and finely got up.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

1. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA; 2. MAHATMA GANDHI: By M. Keshava Bhat. Published by the Vedantic Society, Bayar P.O. (Kerala). Price 50 nP. and 62 nP.

These two books give us a brief but interesting account of the two great masters of Bharat. The books are well prepared and presented.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

ORDER OF SIDDHA-YOGINS: By Dr. Mohan Singh. Published by B. K. Chaudhri, 112, Lawrence Road, Amritsar (India), Pp. 27.

This book is a short account of the Order of Siddha Yogins, prepared by one who has a complete mastery of the subject, in response to a query received from a German Professor and author of a scholarly work on 'Yoga'. The author has furnished a wide and rich variety of information culled from diverse authoritative shastras of not only the Hindus, but also the Tibetans, Nepalese and people of other climes. The origin of the eternal order of siddhas, their status in the cosmic hierarchy, their numerical strength, the different schools of siddha gurus, their hoary traditions, the marvellous powers they possess, the perfection they aim at, their teachings and practices — all this has been set forth in such detail that it makes the book almost exhaustive. However it cannot but be remarked that the author has failed to draw attention to the most ancient and renowned siddha school of South India as founded by the illustrious Sage Agastya. The book is larded with apposite quotations from Bhagavatam, Upanishads, Tantras, Yoga-sutras, etc. and serves to kindle a living interest in the Siddha school of thought.

S. P.

KASTURBA: A Personal Reminiscence: By Sushila Nayar. Pp. 102. Price Rs. 1.50. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14.

This is an intimate pen-picture of Mahatmaji's worthy spouse, by one of his closest disciples, and fittingly enough, opens with a foreword by the Mahatma, letting the world know what she had meant to him. The pages are replete with instances which show up the many facets of her life and personality, and of her aspirations and achievements. Her loyalty to her husband and readiness to face all suffering and sacrifice were visible in every act and thought of hers, though of course she could not help thinking occasionally, 'will Bapu succeed in relieving the sufferings of India's millions?'

Kasturba was deeply religious and worshipped the Tulsi plant regularly. She was observing very punctiliously the Ekadasi and the other Tithi Vratams; a devout reader of the Bhagavatam and the Ramayana, she was reverential toward Brahmins. (P. 55) She had varied interests: games like Badminton and Karrom were also amongst them. (P. 69) She retained to the last her avidity to learn. At three score and ten, she took lessons in geography, history and Gujarati from her immortal spouse, with all the rigour and discipline of a school pupil. (P. 48).

In many ways, she had functioned as the Alter-Ego of the Mahatma, and the difficulty of disentangling her personality from his, could hardly be better vouched than by Gandhiji's view expressed on the day she had shuffled off her mortal coil: 'I cannot imagine life without Ba. I had always wished her to go in my hands so that I would not have to worry as to what will become of her when I am no more. She was an indispensable part of me.' (P. 101)

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 16. Price 20 nP.

CONGRESS AND ITS FUTURE: By M. K. Gandhi. Pp. 48. Price 40 nP.

Here are a few more books.

LIGHT, POWER AND WISDOM: By Swami Sivananda. Published by the Sivananda Literature Research Institute. (Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, Himalayas.) Pp. 198. Price Re. 1.

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THE LIFE SKETCH AND QUINTESSENCE OF THE TALKS OF SADGURU UPASANI BABA MAHARAJA: Published by The Manager, Upasani Sansthana, Sakori, P.O. Rahata, Dt. Ahmednagar. Pp. 80. Price 60 nP.

KAVYA LAKSHMI (Telugu): By Mantravadi Subramanyam. Available at Taruna Sahiti, Alamuru, E. G. Dt. Pp. 34. Price Re. 1.

THUS SPAKE SRI SAI (Pocket size): Compiled by P. Venkateswarlu. Published by Ajanta Publications, Secunderabad. Pp. 91. Price Re. 1.

A pocket size book with a collection of sayings of Sri Sai Baba.

DIARY: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

A beautiful diary with quotations from the Upanishads and Gita rendered by Sri Aurobindo.

PERIODICAL

POET June, 1960: Editor: Krishna Srinivas, 4, Motilal Street, Madras-17. Pp. 32. Annual Subscription Rs. 5.

A laudable venture is this English quarterly devoted exclusively to poetry.

THE VISION: Edited by M. R. Ramaswami. (Anandashram, Kanhangad, South India.) Annual subscription Rs. 3.50.

In dedicating the special number of this journal to Mother Krishnabai of the Anandashram, articles on Divine Mother, Indian Womanhood, the puranic stories from the *Devi Bhagavata*, *Saptasati* and anecdotes of holy women like Hemalata, Sukanya, Andal, Punitavati, Akka Mahadevi also, along with the usual features, make the issue quite enjoyable.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL.

REPORT FOR 1959

Started in 1901 this institution at present conducts an indoor hospital with 50 beds. It has a modern operation theatre, X-ray unit, electrotherapy department, a laboratory, a dental department and an outdoor dispensary with an average daily attendance of about 280 patients. 1,584 cases were admitted in the Indoor Hospital during the year. Total number of patients treated during the year in the outdoor deparment was 1,00,445 of which 24,747 were new. Surgical cases treated were 336. The number of tooth extraction was 622. The number of patients treated in the E.N.T. department was 2,048. 4,976 specimens were tested in the Pathological Department. 673 X-rays were taken. The Electrotherapy Department treated 775 cases. Milk was distributed to an average number of 291 daily recipients, excluding the patients. There were 4,526 books in both the Sevashrama and the Patients' Libraries, of which 1,246 books were lent. The management thank the donors, subscribers and well-wishers and appeal for funds for bed endowment, new construction of monastic workers' quarters and replacement of kitchen block cum workers' quarters.

RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, AJMER.

Started in the year 1944, this Ashrama in Rajasthan has been carrying on humanitarian and cultural activities in the lines of the Ramakrishna Mission. The Ashrama Charitable dispensary rendered medical relief to 23,866 patients in 1958-59, and 16,762 in 1959-60. It also opened a Free Dispensary at the Pushkar Fair and gave medical aid to pilgrims. The Vivekananda Library and Free Reading Room conducted by the Ashrama has 3,831 books, 5 dailies, 5 weeklies, 15 monthlies, and 6 other periodicals. The number of books issued was 1379 in 1958-59 and 1174 in 1959-60. There were three Students in the Ashrama Students' Home. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and also of Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Christ were observed. Lectures and discourses on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Swamiji and others were arranged in many schools and colleges of Ajmer, Krishnagarh, Beawar etc. The management of the Ashrama thank the subscribers and donors and appeal for funds for expansion of its services.

The birthday of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi falls on December 10, 1960

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII JANUARY 1961 No. 9

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna once said that Pandit Gauri of Indes had acquired a miraculous power through his austerities. Whenever he was invited to hold a scriptural controversy, he used to utter loudly a few times the line, 'Whom else shall I, a helpless one, have for refuge but Thee, oh Mother of the pot-bellied Ganesha', preceded by the syllables 'ha, re, re, re'. The Master said: 'The hearts of all got startled with an indescribable fright, when they heard from his mouth those syllables and the line from the hymn to the Devi by Acharya Sankara, uttered in a voice deep and sonorous like the rumbling of clouds. By virtue of that sound the power in Gauri became fully awakened, and he stole away the strength of the adversaries by startling and charming them with it, so that it was then impossible for anyone to defeat Gauri.'

But the Master did not know of that power. As soon as Gauri entered the Dakshineswar temple and uttered loudly, 'ha, re, re, re', some one, as it were, within the Master, pushed him up and made him utter those syllables more loudly than Gauri. Hearing them thus from the mouth of the Master, Gauri uttered them still more loudly. Excited at that, the Master uttered them far more loudly than Gauri. Smilingly the Master used to say, that thus a terrible noise arose, like the din made during inroads by dacoits. The gate-keepers of the Kali-temple came running with sticks and cudgels to the place of the noise. All others were beside themselves with fear. At last Gauri could not utter those words more loudly than the Master and, as if a little dejected, he slowly entered the temple. On knowing that the Master and the newly arrived pandit were raising all that din, all went away roaring with laughter. The Master said: 'Afterwards the Divine Mother told me, that the power which made Gauri unconquerable, was exposed here, and lost to him for ever. Mother attracted that power here (in the Master) for his own good.'

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मूर्तमहेश्वरस्तोत्रम् — A HYMN TO VIVEKANANDA

SARAT CHANDRA CHAKRAVARTI

मूर्तमहेश्वरमुज्ज्वलभास्करमिष्टममरनरवन्द्यम् ।
वन्दे वेदतनुमुज्झितगर्हितकाञ्चनकामिनीबन्धम् ॥

कोटिभानुकरदीप्तसिंहमहो कटितटकौपीनवन्तम् ।
अभीरभीहुंकारनादितदिङ्मुखप्रचण्डताण्डवनृत्यम् ॥

भुक्तिमुक्तिकृपाकटाक्षप्रेक्षणमघदलविदलनदक्षम् ।
बालचन्द्रधरमिन्दुवन्द्यमिह नौमि गुरुविवेकानन्दम् ॥

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, the Incarnation of Siva, shining like the sun, dear to me, worshipped by gods and by men, the very embodiment of the Vedas, free from the terrible bonds of gold and woman, to Him I bow.

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, Oh! a lion effulgent with the rays of ten million suns, with loin cloth round the waist, roaring 'Be fearless, be fearless' causing the directions to reverberate, dancing the fierce 'Tandava' dance, to Him I bow.

To Vivekananda, the Teacher, whose compassionate glance gives both enjoyment and salvation, expert in shattering heaps of sins, wearer of the baby moon, worshipped by Indu, to Him, here I bow.

मूर्तमहेश्वर - The Incarnation of Siva (Swami Vivekananda), स्तोत्रं - A Hymn in Praise (of)

1. (To Vivekananda, the Teacher) मूर्तमहेश्वर - the incarnation of Siva, उज्ज्वल-भास्करं - shining (like the) sun, इष्टं - dear (to me), अमर-नर-वन्द्यं - worshipped by gods and by men, वेद-तनुं - the very embodiment of the Vedas, उज्झित - free from, गर्हित - the terrible, काञ्चन-कामिनी-बन्धं - bonds of gold and woman, (to Him), वन्दे - I bow.

2. (To Vivekananda, the Teacher) अहो - Oh!, सिंहं - a lion, दीप्त - effulgent (with), कोटि-भानु-कर - the rays of ten million suns, कौपीन वन्तं - with loin cloth, कटितट - (round) the waist, हुंकार - roaring, अभीरभी - "(Be) fearless, (be) fearless", नादित-दिङ्मुख - causing the directions to reverberate, नृत्यं - dancing, प्रचण्ड - the fierce, ताण्डव - "Tandava" (dance), (To Him I bow).

3. गुरु विवेकानन्दं - To Vivekananda, the Teacher, कृपा-कटाक्ष-प्रेक्षणं - (whose) compassionate glance (gives), भुक्ति-मुक्ति - (both) enjoyment and salvation, अघ-दल - heaps of sins, विदलन-दक्षं - expert in shattering, बाल-चन्द्र-धरं - wearer of the baby moon, इन्दु-वन्द्यं - worshipped by Indu (moon or writer;) इह - here, नौमि - (to Him) I bow.

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IDEA OF TAPAS IN THE UPANISHADS

The Sanskrit word *tapas* normally means austerity or penance. Asceticism too refers to the same idea. It has been derived from the root *tap* meaning, to heat. Because of this, one Upanishad identifies it with fire. In the Upanishads the idea of tapas had a variety of development, so much so that some scholars have tried to find out a sort of an evolution of the meanings attached to tapas. What originally meant warmth, then knowledge, next came to mean meditation or concentration of the mind and the senses and finally the action or practice that purifies the mind. And this is perfectly understandable, for to acquire knowledge concentration is essential, which is possible when the mind is purified by a course of righteous conduct. At this stage it became identified with varna and ashrama, the station and stage of life. Thence followed the Gita idea of various types of tapas. Nowadays tapas presupposes contemplation along with isolation, renunciation of desires and pleasures and self-inflicted sufferings and pains.

The idea of tapas, though it underwent a change, is found in all the ancient books including the Rigveda Samhita. The Rigveda (10. 190. 1) says that 'From tapas, kindled to its height, truth and eternal law, satya and rta, were born'. Again it (10. 183) considers tapas as the Germ of everything.

> 'I saw thee meditating in thy spirit what sprang from tapas (ardent devotion) and hath hence developed. In plants and herbs, in all existing beings I have deposited the germ of increase.'

Tapas has been hailed as the ally of Manyu (10. 83), where it stands for fervour or heat of emotion or righteous indignation. It again (10. 154) speaks of persons being 'invincible through tapas'. The Taittiriya Aranyaka also says that the devas triumphed over the asuras by brahmacharya and tapas, self-control and concentration.

The various ideas regarding tapas can be had from the Upanishadic texts. The Chhandogya Upanishad considers tapas as conferring meritorious worlds, but for attaining immortality, it says that one must be firmly established in Brahman.

> 'Three are the branches of religious duty. Sacrifice, study and gifts — these are the first. *Austerity* alone is the second, and the celibate student of sacred knowledge, who lives in the house of the teacher throughout his life mortifying his body in the teacher's house, is the third. All these become possessors of meritorious worlds; but he who is established firmly in Brahman, attains immortality' (2. 23. 1).[1]

Acharya Sankara explains that here 'austerity' stands for Krcchra, Candrayana and other forms of mortification. In 3. 17. 4 the Upanishad considers austerity as one of the largesses[2] of the Purusha sacrifice where the life of a man is looked upon as a yajna.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says (in 1. 2. 6) that by tapas[3] Prajapati created vigour, etc. and (in 1. 5. 1) that he created food with it. This and other Upanishads speak about the creation of the entire world through tapas. The Upanishad is particular to point out that mere austerity, sacrifices and worship are of little use without the knowledge of the Imperishable.

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[1] तप एव द्वितीयः...एते पुण्यलोका भवन्ति ।

[2] अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहिंसा सत्यवचनमिति ता अस्य दक्षिणाः ।

[3] स तपोऽतप्यत ।

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'Verily, O Gargi, if one performs sacrifices and worship and undergoes austerity in this world for many thousands of years, but without knowing that Imperishable, limited indeed is that work of his' (3. 8. 10).

Here austerity etc. help the beings 'to conquer the worlds'[4] (6. 2. 16). But it again points out that the Soul is sought by wise people 'by repetition of the Vedas, by sacrifices, by offerings, by penance, by fasting'[5] (4. 4. 22). Another beautiful idea this Upanishad speaks of (in 5. 11. 1) describing as 'supreme austerity' what a sick man suffers before death. Acharya Sankara explains that this suffering should be looked upon with the eye of worship; thereby the sins are destroyed and the fruits of tapasya are obtained. The physical sufferings and fear of death are terrifying and disheartening but much consolation may be derived from this assurance of the scriptures in such dire needs.

The Taittiriya Upanishad too speaks of tapas in different contexts. In 1. 9. 1 it asks us to perform austerity.[6] It also says that according to Taponitya performance of austerity is a duty and that Naka considers study and teaching to be so, for they are the real tapas.[7] The importance of austerity and effort has been well recognized in this Upanishad. In fact, for every goal, spiritual or material, the means set forth is tapas. And in one place Brahman Itself has been identified with it. When Bhrigu repeated his visit to his father Varuna for instruction about Brahman, the latter said, 'Desire to understand Brahman by austerity. Brahman is austerity.'[8] Then by performing austerity Bhrigu came to know of further aspects of truth (3. 2. 1). The commentator points out that till realization of the truth of Tattvamasi is attained, tapas constitutes the repeated thinking of the meanings of the two terms 'Thou' and 'That'. Elsewhere it has been said that the supreme tapas is nothing but 'concentration of the mind and the senses'.[9]

In the Katha Upanishad (2. 15) the supreme goal has been identified with the Pranava, *Aum*, the realization of which all austerities aim at.

'The word which all the Vedas rehearse, and which all austerities proclaim, desiring which men live the life of religious studentship, that word to thee I briefly declare. That is Om!'

The Svetasvatara Upanishad too recognizes the importance of austerity for realizing the Atman, for the latter, it says, is rooted in austerity and self-knowledge.

'As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river-beds, and as fire in the friction-sticks, so is the Atman apprehended in one's own soul, if one looks for Him with true austerity.'[10]

'The Soul, which pervades all things as butter is contained in cream, which is rooted in self-knowledge and austerity[11] — this is Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine! This is Brahman, the highest mystic doctrine!' (1. 15-16).

The Mundaka Upanishad declares that Brahman swells for creation by tapas and His tapas consists of knowledge.

'By austerity Brahman becomes built up. From that, food is produced; from food —

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[4] अथ ये यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा लोकान् जयन्ति ।

[5] तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसाऽनाशकेन एतमेव विदित्वा मुनिर्भवति ।

[6] तपश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च ।

[7] तप इति तपोनित्यः पौरुशिष्टिः । स्वाध्यायप्रवचने एवेति नाको मौद्गल्यः । तद्धि तपस्तद्धि तपः ।

[8] तपसा ब्रह्म विजिज्ञासस्व । तपो ब्रह्मेति ।

[9] मनसश्च इन्द्रियाणां च ऐकाग्र्यं परमं तपः ।

[10] सत्येनैनं तपसा योऽनुपश्यति ।

[11] आत्मविद्या तपोमूलम् ।

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life-breath, mind, truth, the worlds, immortality too in works.

He who is all-knowing, all-wise, *whose austerity consists of knowledge*[12] — from Him are produced the Brahma here, name and form, and food' (1. 1. 8-9).

Moreover, it is from that supreme Being that tapas too originates.

'From Him, too, gods are manifoldly produced, as also the celestials, men, cattle, birds, the in-breath and the out-breath, rice and barley, *austerity*, faith, truth, chastity, and the law (2. 1. 7).

In 3. 1. 5 the Upanishad says that by tapas etc. one should try to realize the Self.

This Soul is obtainable by truth, by austerity, by proper knowledge, by the student's life of chastity constantly practised.[13]

Here the commentator reminds us that it is not so much the physical austerity that is directly useful but the concentration of the mind and the senses. Then by meditation with the purified mind Brahman is realized.

'That subtle Soul is to be known by thought wherein the senses fivefoldly have entered. The whole of men's thinking is interwoven with the senses. When that is purified, the Soul shines forth' (3. 1. 9).

In 3. 2. 4 it again says that the Self cannot be realized through tapas or knowledge unless sannyasa (linga)[14] is practised along with it. Acharya Sankara lays much stress on it. Anandagiri explains that complete renunciation is sannyasa and Indra, Janaka, Gargi and others realized the Self because they were free from attachment though they did not have the external paraphernalia of a recluse.

The Prasna Upanishad too extols austerity. When the sages went to Sage Pippalada, he asked them for preparation to practise for one year faith, celibacy and austerity (1. 2)[15]. In 1. 10 it is said that through these an aspirant reaches the Sun in the Northern Path. Those who observe Prajapati-vrata go to the Moon if they are endowed with austerity and chastity (1. 15).

The Mahanarayana Upanishad speaks of tapas as fire; it is practised by strength and it gives rise to faith. In a passage (10. 1) it euologizes various categories as tapas, by repetition of which the enumerated qualities are attained.

'Right is austerity. Truth is austerity. Understanding of the scriptures is austerity. Subduing of one's senses is austerity. Restraint of the body through such means like fast is austerity. Cultivation of a peaceable disposition is austerity. Giving gifts without selfish motives is austerity. Worship is austerity. The Supreme Brahman has manifested Himself as Bhuh, Bhuvah and Suvah. Meditate upon Him. This is austerity par excellence.'[16]

It will be seen that they practically include all that is required for a complete moral and spiritual discipline. In another passage (78. 2) it extols religious fast as a great tapas.

'Some hold the opinion that austerity is the means of liberation and that there is no austerity higher than religious fast. This excellent austerity is hard to be practised. A person who practises it becomes invincible (or such austerity is unthinkable for the

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[12] यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः ।

[13] सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।

[14] नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात्तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।

[15] भूय एव तपसा ब्रह्मचर्येण श्रद्धया संवत्सरं संवत्स्यथ ।

[16] ऋतं तपः सत्यं तपः श्रुतं तपः शान्तं तपो दमस्तपः शमस्तपो दानं तपो यज्ञं तपो भूर्भुवः सुवर्ब्रह्मैतदुपास्वैतत्तपः ॥

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commonalty). Therefore seekers of the highest good delight in austerity.'[17]

The commentator, however, points out that this declaration of the superiority of religious fast does not detract from the value of self-control, pilgrimage, japa, oblation and the like, which are also considered as different forms of austerity. In 79. 3 the Upanishad says:

> 'By tapas performed in the beginning gods attained godhood. By tapas seers attained to heaven gradually. By tapas we get rid of our enemies who stand in the way of our acquisitions. Everything is founded in tapas. Therefore they say tapas is the supreme (means of liberation).'[18]

Thus we see that the idea of tapas is well developed in the Upanishads, it having different shades of meaning. This fact shows its richness and emotional appeal to the consciousness of the ancients. It has not lost its charm even now. The lure of austerity draws hundreds of spiritual seekers to the hills and dales, to places of solitude and of pilgrimage. It is because of the deep respect for austerity that thousands of people are attracted to leaders even in other fields who have risen only through great sacrifice. Spiritual attainment, wide sympathy and purposeful austerity are the three elements that have drawn people down the ages to the saints and sages, sadhus and sannyasins, yogis and vairagis and even to other people. True, things of the mundane world too were sought through their probable miraculous powers. But still the fact remains that people are awed at the sight of the complete abandon for or the determined effort to get at the goal, throwing to the winds all considerations of personal gain and even of minimum physical comfort. This austerity is the soul of all one-pointed efforts, essential for growth in different fields. Tapas is therefore sure to retain its hold on man even in modern times.

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[17] तप इति तपो नानशनात्परं यद्धि परं तपस्तद् दुर्धर्षं तद् दुराधर्षं तस्मात्तपसि रमन्ते ।

[18] तपसा देवा देवतामग्र आयन् तपसार्षयः सुवरन्वविन्दन् तपसा सपत्नान्प्रणुदामारातीस्तपसि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं तस्मात्तपः परमं वदन्ति ।

THE MONKEY CALLED MIND

The Monkey called Mind
Loafs along the streams and jungles,
And swings from branch to branch.
So, what is the use of running after it?

This is the time for us
To seek the timeless state of Love
To obtain the Grace of the Supreme Light
That makes the Cosmic Dance.

The Beyond
Is the cause and ground
Of the one and the many
And the Life of Life.

Hence, O men of the world!
Come and join!

— SAINT TAYUMANAVAR
(Translated from Tamil by R. S. Murti)

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MUSINGS ON THE KALPATARU DAY

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

January 1 is a red letter day in the calendar of the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna everywhere in the world. This day is so important not because it happens to be the first day of the new year, but because symbolically it came to be the first day of the new life. On this day in 1886 Sri Ramakrishna showered his unbounded grace on lay devotees who had assembled at the Cossipore garden house, where the Master had been lying seriously ill with cancer in his throat. In the afternoon the Master came downstairs unexpectedly and sauntered in the garden towards the assembly of the devotees. And within a few minutes in a singular sweeping act of grace he touched each one of them with the flame of his transmuting power. This flame was ignited for the day by redoubtable Girish. Stopping near him in the garden Sri Ramakrishna had asked, 'Well, Girish, what have you found in me that you proclaim me before all as an incarnation?' At once on his knees, with folded palms raised in adoration, and his voice charged with emotion, Girish replied, 'What can an insignificant creature like me say about one whose glory even sages like Vyasa and Valmiki could not measure?' The depth charge of the intensity of faith with which Girish had uttered these words brought about a volcanic explosion from within the ocean of grace that was Sri Ramakrishna. And he went all out in divine abandon to confer on the devotees greatest blessings of life spiritual irrespective of the consideration of competency. He spoke in these three simple sentences the greatest blessings of the most high: 'What more shall I say! I bless you all. Be illumined!'

These simple words of power set afire the souls of devotees. Forgetting their self-taken promise not to touch his feet while he was ill, they all touched his (savior) feet in salutation. Deeply moved at this manifestation of their devotion Sri Ramakrishna touched every one of them, as a result of which all of them had some instantaneous spiritual experiences.

Sri Ramakrishna himself had said that the wind of God's grace was always blowing. One had only to unfurl the sail. Here there was no need of even unfurling the sail. The wind itself became the unfurled sail too and lapped up the soul in the empirean heights of spiritual experiences. This was a violation of spiritual law, which God incarnate alone could indulge in!

Sri Ramakrishna himself had also said that the mother bird does not break the shell of the egg before the chick was mature enough to be born in the inclemency of the world-weather. But here we find the mother bird becoming aggressive with her compassion and breaking eggs before chicks were ready. If this is not God's soul hunger, what is this?

Now, this violation of law, this aggression of compassion, if it happened only for a day, it would be a dead day of bygone history. But the actions of God incarnate on earth, though they may be actions in history, are indeed accents of the Timeless in the heart of time. Even as actions temporal, they are but the manners of the Eternal.

In the 'Acts of the Apostles' in the *New Testament* there is a significant passage which says:

'To whom also he showed himself alive *after his passion* by many infallible proofs...'
(Acts, I. 3.)

The God incarnate on earth even after casting off his corporeal body, stays alive in the 'next room' 'after his passion', i.e. to say in the singular acts which he had performed while alive on earth. If the wound of Christ's body was not even today bleeding in the mystic world-process, how could the mystics receive stigmata even to this day?

Sri Krishna says in the Gita (IV. 9):

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

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Whosoever knows in true light, My Divine birth and action will not be born again when he leaves his body; he will attain Me, O Arjuna.

To know the Lord's divine birth and actions in true light would mean understanding the Lord's real nature as absolute spirit and also his embodiment in maya. Here Sri Krishna gave away a great secret of self-apprehension, which the theistic religions were quick to grasp and profit by. In such religions, therefore, 'leela-smarana' or remembrance of divine acts of God incarnate on earth is considered to be one of the most potent spiritual practices. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (XII. 4. 40) puts it categorically:

संसारसिन्धुमतिदुस्तरमुत्तितीर्षो-
र्नान्यः प्लवो भगवतः पुरुषोत्तमस्य ।
लीलाकथारसनिषेवणमन्तरेण
पुंसो भवेद् विविधदुःखदवार्दितस्य ॥

The jiva or the embodied soul, who is scared by the miseries of the world, if he wants to get across the terrific ocean of transmigratory existence, then the only way open to him is to take recourse to the remembrance of the Lord's divine actions; there is no other raft for crossing this ocean.

The embodied soul can apprehend the *Nitya* or the Eternal, only in his *Leela* or divine sports as an incarnation. Hence *Bhagavatam's* emphasis on 'leela-smarana' or remembrance of the divine deeds. The Song Celestial of the Timeless, has been recorded in the disc of time during the *avatarana* or descent of the Lord on earth. If the aspirant can bring his power of concentration to the pointedness of a gramophone pin, and set it on the disc of 'leela' the eternal music can be heard again. If one can have the gopi-heart Krishna-flute can be heard on the banks of Yamuna even today. On the banks of Kala-kalindi, or time that flows as Yamuna, the eternal one roams about flute in hand.

The only way of apprehending him is the devout observance of the religious calender for 'leela-smarana', remembrance of divine deeds. Even a religion like Buddhism which leans on atheism finds it necessary to observe a thrice-blessed day.

In the calendar of the Ramakrishna tradition January 1 is one of the most significant days, being the day of the lawbreaking aggressive compassion of the Lord. If the devotees of the Lord want this aggression to continue, they must rouse in his heart on this day, the divine 'passion' which devotees did on January 1, 1886. If the calf strikes the udder of the mother-cow with its tender lips, how can milk help flowing again?

For the remembrance of the divine deeds of the Lord we must know as many details of those deeds as possible from all available sources. Our greatest authority in regard to the life of Sri Ramakrishna is Swami Saradananda. His *magnum opus Sri Sri Ramakrishna-leela-prasanga* (translated as *Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master*), is a work unexcelled in hagiography in its details, authenticity, rational expositions, interpretative deliberations and illuminating insights.

Such an authority on Sri Ramakrishna's life, Swami Saradananda, did not actually approve of the saying that Sri Ramakrishna had become 'Kalpataru' on January 1, 1886. He convincingly argued:

'Some devotees like Ramachandra have described the happening of that day as the Master's turning into wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpataru). But, it is more reasonable, it seems to us, to call it 'the self-revelation of the Master', or the 'bestowal of freedom from fear on all devotees by revealing himself'. The Kalpataru, it is said, gives to all whatever good or bad they ask for. But the Master did not do so; he made clear through that event the fact of his being a God-man and his bestowal of protection against and freedom from fear on all without the slightest discrimination.'[1]

Now, if notwithstanding Swami Saradananda's disapproval, this great day has quietly come to prevail in the Ramakrishna world with the word 'Kalpataru' indelibly inscribed on its forehead—and this has happened without any theological fight—and neither the sannyasins nor the lay devotees appear to be sorry for that, in all humility we can only take this fact, as the will of the Lord. And this

[1] *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 4, 1st Edition, p. 896.

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will of the Lord may perhaps be understood this way : as it happened, this day was marked out specially for showering grace only on the lay devotees—as Swami Saradananda has written, '....it is a matter of wonder that none of the Sannyasin disciples of the Master was present there that day'—as distinguished from those who were going to become monks. And therefore it would appear that the lay disciple's nomenclature of the great deed has been providentially accepted in preference to the monastic disciple's nomenclature.

'M' the writer of *the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* has not written any account of the day, proving perhaps the fact that he was absent from the scene. Swami Saradananda has quoted in *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* the fragmentary personal accounts or personal reactions of the day as given by such eye witnesses as Ramlal Chattopadhyaya and Vaikunthanath Sannyal. There is also the description of the occasion as given by another eye witness, Akshaykumar Sen, in his famous work *Ramakrishna Punthi.* Akshaykumar also used the word 'Kalpataru'. These narrations of the day are more or less familiar to the readers of the Ramakrishna literature. What have become obscure and not so easily available is the narration of the day as Rama Chandra Dutta saw and understood it. As he was largely responsible in introducing the word 'Kalpataru' his following narration[2] of this day will be found interesting :

'Sri Ramakrishna was brought to the Kasipur garden house for treatment. Here he stayed for eight months. It will take one a yuga to narrate all the leelas he performed in Kasipur...

'When his ailments showed no signs of abatement, some devotees would observe fasts in the name of Taraknath while others supplicated to the Master himself for his own recovery. When nothing proved to be of any avail, one day a few devotees submitted with folded hands,

"Lord, why are you feigning this illness? We have tried our very best but with no effect on the illness. We have now realized that unless you yourself deign to find the remedy, there is no other way."

'In reply he made various funs. But when the devotees persisted in their request he said,

"You have not yet been able to understand the cause of the disease. Every action bears its fruit. Good act bears good fruit and bad, bad; one has to reap the fruit according to the act. If you have had to reap the fruits of all your evil deeds and sins, your future will be terrible. But it is God's way to suffer the fruits of action; therefore all the multitude of your sins I have accepted in my hand. On the day you have given me the power of attorney, on that very day you have been freed from your accumulated sins. Unless sins are eradicated and the body is made pure, relationship with God cannot be established. In human body one has to suffer the consequences of sin. And so the disease, in my body. Through this disease in my body you have become freed of sins and whosoever will self-surrender unto me they too will be released. So it is that I am getting through the suffering for their sins too."

'Though we all heard these words, we did not quite realise their significance. It was his another fun, we thought.

'Thiswise Ramakrishnadeva passed his days feigning illness. Physicians of various sorts, sadhus of different types and a multifarious assortment of common people used to visit him. On some days he would saunter about in the garden like one who had no disease at all. On other days from his sore in the throat jar-fulls of blood would come out. And the intriguing part of all this was that when the physician gave a medicine for counteracting a certain symptom, on that day that very symptom would get aggravated. His body could not stand even the Homeopathy medicine, the

[2] Translated from the Bengali work *Ramachandrer Vaktritavali*, pp. 341-47, 1312 Edn.

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taking of one grain of which would throw his entire body into convulsion. Hence the physicians would not easily venture to give him medicine.

'As mentioned above, various sorts of people used to come to him and almost everyone would return satisfied with a feeling of blessedness. And it so came about on January 1, 1886 that he became the Kalpataru. On that day at five in the afternoon when seated on one end of the garden we were all engaged in discussing various topics we found him coming towards us. With transfixed gaze we all kept looking at his face. His entire body being covered with cloth no other part of the body was visible but his face. That lustre and unprecedented beauty of his that we witnessed on that day are just beyond delineation. Gradually he drew near us and raising his right hand said, "What more shall I tell you. May spiritual consciousness be awakened in all of you."

'तोमादेर आमि आर कि बलिब।
आमि बलितेछि ये सकलेर चैतन्य हडक'

So saying he began to place his palm one by one on the chests of devotees, as a result of which everyone became mad as it were. Whomsoever we saw before us that day we caught him and brought before the Lord and he showered his grace on all. We were all stirred to our depths with joy finding that the Lord had become the Kalpataru. Knowing fully well that such a day, so rare to the jivas, will not come again, we began to run hither and thither to seek out persons until none was left. Shouts of victory to Sri Ramakrishna continued to resound in the firmament. Incessant raining of flowers by devotees on the Lord went on and the ocean of *ananda* was in deluge. All this time he was standing in ecstasy. Then coming back to the normal consciousness he returned to his room.

'Afterwards one day he quietly called this servant and asked,

"Look here, you all say so many things about me. If all that should be true, why then is this miserable state of mine? This sore in the throat, this diseased body —what all these are due to? Gauranga had such beauty, learning, miraculous powers—why do I not have all those powers? Why do I not have such beauty as his and such learning? And can you tell me what is the reason for my leaving Dakshineswar?"

'Hearing such questions of the Master I held his feet and said with folded palms:

"Lord, you are here again with your waggery! Can this ever be within the capacity of the meanest of your servants to discern the cause of your actions? But if such is your behest, then remembering your feet I say, if you give me strength I must be able to tell the reason. You have made me understand that in gross body the manifestation of *leela* can never be of the same type. Things happen according to the necessity of times. Gaurangadeva acted in the past according to the felt necessities of his times. In this incarnation things cannot proceed in that fashion. Lord, truth to be told, if beauty and miraculous powers were the only means for the salvation of the jivas, we would have long before turned into saints. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Gauranga, Christ — their unlimited powers, beauty and splendour have all been extolled in the scriptures. And we have been hearing all those tales since our childhood. But why has not that borne any fruit? We came to you hearing that you were a sadhu. But you alone can say how you have entered within our hearts. The place where we would fain have seated God, you have come and occupied that place. How hard we have striven to drive you out from that place so that Parameshwara might be seated there — we have discussed ever so much, presented your case to the pundits saying that you were God incarnate and argued with them with the intention of having our weakness destroyed by them but uptil now no body has been able to displace you. No body's

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learning, intelligence and dialectics have been able to disprove that. Helplessly, therefore, we have been forced to call you God."

"You have said that like the wealthy ladies who conduct their affairs from behind the screen, you too have been performing your *leelas*. Seeing your disease, your outer covering, outsiders will fly away. But the fortunate one who will receive a grain of your grace shall understand the mystery of your *leela*. Lord, you alone know whether by speaking about these few outer things you are wheedling us or settling the issue. But the question arises in my mind: is it possible for one to discern the beingness (or Bhava) of God through such tales of separation-pangs told in regard to the *leelas* of Radhakrishna, Ramasita or Gauranga? Laughing and weeping is the *leela* of man. When through such *leelas* they could be considered as God, then is not this disease of yours also the measure of your *leela*, specially when you yourself have divulged the reason for this?"

"And, Lord, as to the other question, from the day you came out of Dakshineswar the fate of ordinary people has brightened up. Because of this pretext of disease thousands of men and women have had the darshan of your feet."

'Ramakrishnadeva then said, "You are telling all these because of your faith." On hearing this from his lips I said,

"Thakur, enough of lengthening the talk! You are acknowledging my faith, for this I am compelled to call you God. I was a heretic, a barbarian and an arch atheist —I to call a man God! God Himself was seeking out a little place in my heart, and forsooth now it appears that by having faith today I have installed you in the position of God! Lord, be that so, give me that strength, that power so that I can really do so. If through my faith being a man you become God, that is not your ordinary *leela*, again. Thakur, God Himself has to stand before man by furnishing so many introductions and testimonials, and do you mean to say that if a man declares another man as God people will just accept that? You may say whatever you are pleased to say and everything behoves you."

'Even then Ramakrishnadeva continued to say, "Do I not so much wish to stay at ease?"

"आमार कि साध हयना
ये एकटु स्वच्छन्दे थाकि?

I replied,

"It is all a disappointment for us to try to answer your points. Yet I shall remind you of only one thing and then close my lips. Thakur, one day in the evening standing on the western verandha of your room you said, 'Whoever will come with the hankering for realization of God, for attainment of knowledge and seeking to know how he could see Him, his aspirations will be fulfilled.' Then laying stress on your words you again said, 'O my men, verily his longings will be fulfilled.' Thakur, will you tell me who is the man who can tell this? Who is that siddhapurusha who has the boldness to say so? With our ocular perception we are noticing how heretics without any spiritual practices are getting wonderfully transformed. Even after seeing all these are we to have a mistaken opinion about you? If you say so, we are just helpless. And when you refer again and again to your disease, may I ask you, one thing: Sri Radha in Brindavan, what was her terrific suffering in the tenth state of *viraha* caused by separation from Krishna. Can her a single day's suffering be borne by any jiva? Because Radha performed this *nara-leela* was she ever without Krishna? You yourself have said, "Brahma and sakti are identical." As I said this his face flushed. As soon as the symptoms of ecstasy were discernible I ended the talk.'

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THE PARAMAHAMSA AND THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI CHIDBHAVANANDA

Testing Each the Other

On one side the love and regard between the Paramahamsa and the young seeker was growing fast. But it was no mere sentimental attachment that marked their relationship. The mental make of the two being dissimilar, the urge to test and analyse each other was growing in them. The Paramahamsa had taken a vow never to touch money, not to speak of giving any value to it. The resolve had such a telling effect on his constitution that he could not even unknowingly allow a coin touch his body. This appeared to the questioning youth rather unusual and bordering on affectation. He was not prepared to grant the possibility of such a reaction in a normal man. He would rather have the man thoroughly tested before arriving at a conclusion. One day when the saint was out, the curiosity-stricken youth just managed to conceal a silver coin in his seat. No sooner did the unsuspecting saint occupy the seat than he sprang from it as if stung by a scorpion. He exclaimed that there was something which caused him pain and forced him to recoil from that seat. The attending disciples at once set about examining the seat and found a silver coin somehow deposited there. Narendra stood aghast at this development! Surely there was no pretension here, in this untutored child of Nature. The Paramahamsa however was quick to understand the design behind this incident. He fully approved of Narendra's act. 'It is not enough that you readily believe in the words of a holy man. Examine day and night whether there is harmony between the words and the deeds of such a person. As the money-changer scrutinises each coin, you try to find whether a person is genuine or counterfeit.' With these words the Paramahamsa approved of the youth's testing him. The critical-minded young man was immensely pleased with this approbation by the Master of his venture.

It was indeed a fact that the Paramahamsa had an inordinate fondness for Narendra, bordering on craze. Despite this, on an occasion he assumed an unusual and unaccountable coldness towards his beloved. For months at a stretch he did not speak a word to the youth. When the youth presented himself in his room every now and then the Paramahamsa would not cast even a stealing glance at him. Verily it was indifference to the core! And it was sufficient to touch any visitor to the quick. But the usually sensitive Narendra was not in the least affected by it. As was his wont he came, paid homage to the Master, attended to his accustomed activities, maintained his blissful demeanour and then returned home. This went on week after week. After this long lapse, the Paramahamsa one day broke his silence and remarked, 'Have you not noticed that I do not these days exchange a word with you? How is it that all the same you are regularly visiting this place?' This kind of insult added to injury would drive any man into a rage. 'On the ground that you do not talk with me, should I think of cutting myself away from you? Does relationship between us merely rest on exchange of words?' — was the reply that the youth submitted. This immensely pleased the Paramahamsa. Each had tested the other no doubt in his own way, but the coalescing of these two seemingly conflicting minds had been going on steadily and spontaneously.

The Fulfilment

It was after running to quite a number of savants with the vexing question 'Sir, have you seen God?' that the divinely athirst youth had repaired to the Paramahamsa. Till then he had nowhere received a satisfying answer to his

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query. It was only at Dakshineswar that the soul-captivating affirmation had come; 'Yes, my boy, I have an unbroken perception of Him and I shall also bring you to it.' Subsequently the Master awakened the divine consciousness in the youthful seeker. Transcendental communion and the dissolution of the little self in the Absolute were graciously bestowed on him. Nought has the individual to gain beyond the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. From that Absolute State Vivekananda was called back by the Master to the relative plane. The Master then put a pointed question to the just then enlightened disciple, 'What is your life's wish?' 'Bless me that I may ever be lost in the Absolute' was the submission that followed. 'You blab like ordinary ones. Do have a higher state than what you ask for' reprimanded the Master. The disciple stood baffled at this startling statement. 'You have not come to this earth to enjoy the spiritual feast all by yourself; you have come to share it with others' was the Master's further commission. The Master was the first to know this disciple's great life-mission. It behoved an Apostle Vivekananda to first nourish the spiritually starved and then and then only enter into Beatitude. The disciple quietly submitted to the Master's charge unto him. Contrary to the normal way this disciple had the consummation first and the training afterwards. What took place in his case used to get explained through a simile by the Master. Creepers of the gourd variety put forth berry first and flower next. Exalted ones like Narendra have illumination first and spiritual practices next, these very practices being more an aspect of their mission rather than any self-preparation. The Paramahamsa had intuited this unique position of his favourite disciple.

In the benign presence of the Paramahamsa, Vivekananda was rapidly ripening into fulfilment in the plane of spirituality. The Paramahamsa felt that the object of his own advent had started taking a shape and that his physical presence was no longer necessary. He decided to cast off the slough and selected an auspicious day for that purpose. A few days before he dropped the mortal coil he summoned Vivekananda into his room and was closeted with him. Both the Master and the Disciple sat in meditation and were long lost in the Beyond. In that exalted state the Disciple had a unique experience; he felt that a divine power designed to redeem the world took possession of him. In corroboration of it, the Paramahamsa coming from the exalted state, made a significant statement. The purport of it was that the spiritual power which had been generated and accumulated in his person had been made over just then to a worthy successor for the welfare of humanity. All this was verily a divine dispensation. The bestower felt profoundly happy in that the spiritualising potency which had been acquired stage by stage had now been bequeathed to a worthy recipient. Vivekananda in his turn bowed his head in reverence and submitted to be the humble instrument of the Divine. The Power that was in the one a while back got transplanted into the other a while later.

The Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda have therefore to be taken as an Inseparable Pair. The life of either without that of the other would perforce have been incomplete. From various points of view can it be seen that one complemented and made complete the career of the other. All root and no fruit is of no avail. And fruit is impossible without the root. The Paramahamsa was the root and his apostle verily the fruit. Lightning and thunder give completion to the cloud phenomenon; the one without the other is an incomplete cosmic function. Sri Ramakrishna was the energising lightning and Vivekananda the thundering dispenser of the energy. The image of the presiding deity in a temple has its two phases—the Immobile and the Mobile (the *Achalamurti* and the *Utsavamurti*). The former is permanently rooted in the sanctum sanctorum, the latter comes out in procession on festival days. The devotee has to make efforts to gain access to the sanctum in order to adore the Mulamurti. But the Utsavamurti by appearing in public makes it easy to one and all to adore the deity. In the former case

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grace draws people to where it is enshrined, and in the latter, grace goes about seeking its beneficiaries. As such both the phases are indispensable in the scheme of temple worship. Here the Paramahamsa takes the place of Achalamurti and the Swami that of the Utsavamurti.

People there are who make something like a distinction between devotion and knowledge. But the Master was never tired of pointing out on every pertinent occasion that pure devotion and pure knowledge are one and the same. Loving without knowing or knowing without loving cannot be. The oneness of love and knowledge has been unmistakably revealed in the lives of these complementary personalities. The Paramahamsa shows himself as a Bhakta to all intents and purposes; but within he is a Jnani to the core. The upheaval of rolling waves is seen on the surface, but the ocean at the bottom is all stillness. Even such is the Paramahamsa. He chants the name of the Lord, he sings, he dances, he goes into trance; thus he presents himself in an exuberance of devotion. But the unfathomable Con-science is ever in Itself. This in reality is the stuff of the Paramahamsa. Vivekananda on the other hand presents himself as a searching Jnani; with the sword of discrimination he mercilessly cuts asunder all the trouble-giving superimposition on the Reality. Before the onslaught of his penetrating intellect and unrelenting analysis, no sentimentalism, no meaningless customs and manners, no privileges, no exclusiveness, no superstition, no dogmatism, no weakness masquerading as religion, no artificial barriers, no narrowness or bigotry of any kind can hope to linger. But within the heart of this roaring lion was the tenderness and meekness of a lamb which characterises a devotee. The elephant has tusks without to assail with and teeth within to masticate and absorb. Even such is this Cyclone of a Vivekananda. Viveka or Discrimination that he is, he mercilessly uproots all the weed, and fosters the plant of the life eternal. It is given only to a few among us to see the all-soft, sweet, soul-captivating tenderness in this tearing and roaring Rudra. Within he is a Bhakta to the core, without he is a blazing Jnani. Indeed he who is a Bhakta is verily a Jnani.

From days of yore it has been the tradition in India to classify the Enlightened Ones as Brahmarishis and Rajarishis. The first group take to fostering the creative genius of Self-culture. Varieties of sadhana-patterns through which the spiritual potency may be spontaneously and unfailingly drawn out are discovered by these explorers into the Realm Beyond. Their work is akin to tapping at various springs that lie hidden within a well. When access is gained to the Source, life-elevating energy gets accumulated in abundance. Those who accomplish this are the Brahmarishis. But it is not enough that the springs in a well copiously gush out in life-giving waters. These waters have to be drawn out as abundantly as they pour out and the drawn out waters have to be properly canalised and distributed. Otherwise stagnation may set in and obstruct the Cosmic plan and purpose. Distribution is as important as production and this applies more relentlessly to the spiritual field than to any other. Those who undertake to co-ordinate and distribute the spiritual wealth are classified as Rajarishis. The Paramahamsa explored and exploited the original Source to completion. But the completion is not in the mere discovering and getting; what has been got has to be utilised as well. Mother Nature tries at all levels to complete her plan by creating and by utilising. Where the creation does not culminate in utilisation the plan is incomplete. A kind of vacuum is thereby created and Nature abhors vacuum. The Paramahamsa found that his creative achievements might go to waste if they were not distributed and utilised through a proper vehicle. Like a boiler fully laden with steam he hankered for a worthy engine through which he could direct his spiritual energy. Vivekananda on his side came as a mighty vehicle seeking the Propelling Power. That this Propelling Power was the philosopher's stone which would totally transform him, he did not know. In the meeting of these two

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Personalities a possible Cosmic vacuum got infilled. Through the vehicle of Vivekananda the garnered spiritual energy of the Master became available in profusion to the spiritually starved souls all over the globe. The spiritual inundation which they released is continuing to spread. The full working out of its potency is yet in the womb of time. These twin Personalities have each a distinctiveness with an appeal of his own. Those who are brought up in the old ways easily understand and take to the Paramahamsa, and through the Paramahamsa they come to understand Vivekananda, the modern vehicle. But those who are nurtured on modern lines easily take to the Vivekananda way, and through him they gain access to the ancient pattern of the Paramahamsa. We see two personalities representing two approaches—one necessarily leading to the other for completeness.

A coin has necessarily its two sides — the stamp on either being equally important. The obverse reveals the ruler or the Government whose issue it is, the reverse indicates its worth. In the latest mint of the coin of Indian spiritual heritage the Paramahamsa and the Swami happen to be the two sides — representing the Sanatana Dharma and the Yuga Dharma, the Eternal Verity and Its Adaptation to suit the age. The uniqueness behind this one Personality in two forms is that several of the intricate and perplexing points in the Vedanta get themselves best explained and clarified through their lives. They may be said to be the living commentary on the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita has it that Arjuna recoiled from action because of ignorance. The other phase of this is brought out by Vivekananda in his choosing to be lost to the world in and through Beatitude. In the former case Sri Krishna admonished Arjuna, his counterpart, saying that action was the only means to actionlessness. In the latter case the Paramahamsa made his counterpart understand that blending action and Beatitude was superior to mere Beatitude.

In defining the Ultimate Reality the Upanishad proclaims, आसीनो दूरं व्रजति 'Sitting It goes everywhere.' Brahman may be said to be static as well as kinetic — the one aspect being as important as the other. It sits as well as makes Its presence everywhere. The Paramahamsa was where he sat, and the Swami made his presence felt all over the globe. The Immobile-mobile uniqueness of Brahman is best exemplified in this Dual Personality.

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

'Infinite is what is beyond manifestation, and what has become manifested also is Infinite'. This is about the sublimest affirmation of the Upanishads. The Paramahamsa represents the ideal of Nirguna Brahman, the Infinite beyond manifestation. Swami Vivekananda represents that of the Saguna Brahman, the Infinite in and through manifestation. Sectarian philosophers are inclined to differentiating and minimising the value of the one or the other. The correct position is to equate the one with the other — the Saguna with the Nirguna. The Paramahamsa and the Swami have done this best through their extraordinary lives. Now spiritual aspirants have a very important point to bear in mind. A good teacher sometimes magnifies one particular aspect of a thing in order to drive it home effectively in the minds of the taught. The Paramahamsa in his personal life represents the conserving side of spirituality, and the Swami on his side has magnified the releasing and the distributing side. The work of the latter necessarily accompanies the work of the former. But spiritual aspirants have perforce to start their career with a simultaneous seeking and serving; for one aids the other. In other words genuine followers of these Masters have to meditate as well as do work as an act of worship.

(Concluded)

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

(The Master and disciple)

P. NAGARAJA RAO

I

In the course of human history there have been repeated attempts to challenge and ridicule the claims of religion and liberate men from folly and the weakness of will. The contemporary challenge is the most powerful and has influenced all sections of the community, the educated and the uneducated. The challenge takes up two lines of attack. The religious truths and categories like God, soul, immortality, sin, etc. are declared as unverifiable and unknowable through the ordinary modes of knowledge. They are dogmatic declarations, based on the facile imagination of men and have no existence in reality. Secondly, the practice of religion in the past and even today by several sects has produced untold misery to men. It is frankly anti-humanistic. Religions teach us to fly away from the social agonies of the age to mountain tops and monasteries. It has been indifferent to the welfare of men here and now. It has developed an escapist other-worldliness. The various dogmatic theologies of the world have degenerated into arrogant sects, and vie with one another in the art of competitive indoctrination of masses through all horrible methods. Each of these sects claims to be in exclusive possession of the truth and declare, its rivals as heretics. It is the anti-rational and anti-humanistic nature of religion that has made the critics debunk it. Some have been exasperated by the exploitation of the masses' ignorance by the vested interest in religion. They declare, 'A militant atheism is better than a dishonest religion.'

The challenge has been accepted by the great saints of India, and there has been no age when the representatives of the authentic religion have not appeared in India. Sri Ramakrishna is our great Rishi. He is an illustrious example of the mystical tradition (perennial philosophy) which runs right through the religious history of this country from the days of the Rig-Veda. In the words of Romain Rolland, 'he is the consummation of the two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people.' He is a branch of the true vine. 'He did not come to destroy or fulfil but to bear testimony.' He did not speak like a scribe from his books or as a bespectacled scholar from his research thesis. He spoke from his authentic religious experience. His message is faithful to the past, full of possibilities for the future, deeply rooted in our national consciousness, thoroughly representative of the authentic and true in religion. He is the starting point of the renaissance of Hinduism. This illiterate temple priest did not take anything on trust. He is the unwearied experimenter of all religions and forms of worship. He had been initiated into Tantric, Vaishnava, and Vedanta methods of spiritual discipline. He then practised with success the Islamic and the Christian forms of spiritual life. After a full and vivid firsthand personal experience, he declared the 'unity of all religions' and 'fellowship of all faiths'. This is the corner-stone of the religion we need. Ramakrishna says, 'I have had to practise all the religions once. Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, and I have walked the path of different denominations of Hinduism again — of Sakta, Vaishnava, Vedanta, and other sects. I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are travelling, only they are coming through diverse ways.'

This declaration of the Paramahamsa sums up the true character of the spiritual religion of India. The centre of religion has shifted from authority, church, and scriptures to spiritual experience. It alone affirms the truth of religion. The way of looking at religion makes it rational and non-dogmatic. It deals a final blow to all that stands between God and Man.

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The fact of spiritual realization discloses the truth that the different religions of the world aim at one and the same God. The quest is the same for all. The goal is the same. The way to it differs from religion to religion. The language, the mode of presentation, the dogmas and the rituals, differ, because of the differences in the psychological temper of men. All religions are pathways to God. None need run down any, or seek to convert others. Each should grow to his best. Some of us are attracted by the 'way of knowledge', some choose the 'way of devotion', and others incline to the 'way of deeds'.

The fellowship of faiths, the fundamental oneness of all religions takes the fangs away from the acts of bigots. It engenders a universal toleration, an active love and charity to all fellowmen. It removes the ills of religion, hatred and strife, conversion, crusades, and inquisition. Sage Ramakrishna lived and practised equally all faiths and declared with no air of condescension, that all faiths are true alike.

Like all the great world teachers, he too speaks in parables. He uses the parables with a remarkable skill for the teaching of morals. The didactic purposes are put through simple observations full of worldly wisdom with a tinge of quaint humour. His direct teaching, homely argument, attracted all to his fold.

For the first time Max Muller gave him the title, the Mahatma in an article in the Nineteenth Century. Max Muller has himself collected the sayings of Ramakrishna. Sri Rajagopalachari describes Ramakrishna's sayings as a Upanishad.

Referring to the nature of the ultimate Reality as personal and impersonal, Ramakrishna said, 'A dyer used to dye his dresses in a special manner. He used to ask his customer, "How would you like me to dye your dress?" If the customer answered red, the dyer dipped the dress in a vat and then took it out saying, "Here is your dress dyed red". Another wanted yellow, the dyer dipped the cloth in the same vat and took it out, lo! it was yellow. Also for other colours he used the same vat, obtaining different results. A customer who had noticed all this, told the dyer, "My friend, I have no preference for any particular colour. I would like mine to be dyed in the colour you are dyed." The Lord now shows Himself in one form, now in another, and sometimes in no form, always according to the needs of the devotee. Only the divine Dyer knows in what colour He Himself is dyed.' The spiritual experience is the same but the credal formulations are different relative to the minds of men.

Ramakrishna brings out the true characteristic of Indian philosophy, namely, that it is not merely an intellectual exercise but an integral transformation. It is not mere speculative enjoyment. He says, 'Learning books on philosophy, grammar, etc. only hinder and puzzle the mind, "the granthas" (books) are only "granthis" (knots). Mere speculation is of no use. An almanac foretells heavy rains, but no matter however much you squeeze the book, not one drop of water will come out of it.'

Ramakrishna gives us the fundamental tenets of the eternal gospel. Religion is one. The followers of a living faith are guided and illumined by one light. We are all pilgrims to the same light.

To enter the spiritual life, we must first purify ourselves, through the practice of charity and devotion to the Lord, in utter sincerity. Ceremonial purity and ethical excellence are absolutely necessary. Ethical life purges us of our egoism and ennobles us to have an all-embracing love of God. Love of God transforms into unstinted service and charity towards our fellowmen. Humanism, to be effective, must be rooted in religion. The Katha-Upanisad declares, 'not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is not composed can reach the Lord through right knowledge.'

Divine love is the result of good life. Sri Ramakrishna was once asked when shall 'I' be free, his pithy answer was when 'I' shall cease to be. There you have in a nutshell the

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great mystic doctrine of 'self naughting' as the means of salvation. The Crucifixion must precede Resurrection.

Ramakrishna never dwelt upon the vileness of man's mortal nature, and the enormity of his sin. He declared that God and man are organic. Man is not a fallen creature tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement has restored the true meaning of the Vedanta. It is the religion we need. It is catholic in outlook, universal in application, and humanistic in practice. It declares that religion can never absolve us from our duty. True religion is the basis of character. It satisfies the demand of the intellect and the needs of humanity. Some of our erstwhile agnostics like Aldous Huxley are among its admirers today.

The religion of Ramakrishna is the urgent need of India and humanity. In the philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda we have the splendid example of a new orientation of the monistic philosophy of Sankara. It emphasizes the identity of worship and service. The movement has introduced a missionary zeal.

In an over-organized world like ours, the only possible way to keep away from the attritions of time is the companionship of the great mystics like Ramakrishna. They are, in the words of Aldous Huxley, the salt of the earth. If they are not there, there is nothing to keep our earth disinfected, nothing to prevent it from falling to decay. The mystics are the channels through which a little knowledge flows down into our human universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and insane.

To an unbelieving world, based on untruth and lovelessness, with its alarming developments of nuclear weapons of destruction, given over to power and pelf, Sri Ramakrishna has given the gospel, that true religion is a force and not a mere form. It is our inward power that helps us to overcome failure, fear, and frustration. Swami Vivekananda sums up his Master's message which cannot be improved.

> 'Other teachers taught special religions which bear their names, but this great teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for himself. He left every religion undisturbed, because he had realised that in reality they are all part and parcel of one Eternal religion.'

On another occasion Vivekananda described his Master 'as the living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, and was in fact the spirit of the Upanishads in human form.... the harmony of all the diverse thoughts in India.'

II

Swami Vivekananda spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in three continents and built the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission, and set it on the soundest foundation, to serve the needs of humanity as the most powerful spiritual force. But for Vivekananda, the great message of Ramakrishna would not have been so widely known and generally accepted, as it is to-day. He looked upon his master as the great avatar of our age. He writes :

> 'The time was ripe for one to be born, the embodiment of both head and heart ; the time was ripe for one to be born, who in one body would have the brilliant intellect of Sankara and the wonderfully expansive infinite heart of Chaitanya ; one who would see in every sect, the same spirit working, the same God, one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the outcast, for the down-trodden for everyone in this world, inside India or outside India ; and at the same time whose grand, brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside India and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence .... Such a man was born, the time was ripe.'

Vivekananda was a tough and brilliant intellect. He had abundant energy, superhuman passion for anything he put his hands to, undaunted courage to go ahead with what he thought the right way. He never was timid, hesitant and faltering in anything he did. He attended the Parliament of Religions on 11th September 1893 in Chicago. His address to the Parliament marks a celebrated day in the history of Hinduism. Romain Rolland gives us a graphic description of the impression pro-

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duced by the Swamiji in the West. 'The *American Express,* applauded his speech in glowing terms. It declared, "undoubtedly the greatest figure is Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions"'. The American newspapers described every aspect of the Swamiji's personality, 'His red robe drawn in at the waist by an orange cord, his great yellow turban which accentuated the raven black of his hair, his olive complexion, his dark eyes, his red lips and above all his wonderful voice, an admirable baritone having the vibrations of a Chinese'. His speech was 'like a tongue of flame'. It kept the audience spell-bound and their attention never flagged.

In his address he laid the foundations for the advocacy of Hinduism as the universal religion of the world. In his address he laid stress on universal tolerance and human brotherhood. He declared :

> 'Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendent fanaticism have long pestered this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair.'

The Swamiji believed in the eternal truths of the Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and the Yoga-sutras. He pointed out to the world of warring religions that all religions are equally true and each religion is one of the many approaches to the Lord. On the doors of the American Vedanta centres runs the message, 'He is one but the sages describe him differently'. Swamiji all his life pleaded intensely for the fellowship of faiths and the fundamental oneness of Reality. He was no lover of easy, soft religion. He was critical and rational in his approach to religion. He repeatedly said, 'cease to look upon every little village superstition as the mandate of the Vedas.'

In the opinion of Vivekananda religion is the most powerful instrument of social regeneration and individual development. His philosophy is practical Vedanta. He imparted to the monistic Vedanta of Sankara a practical shape by throwing into relief the positive aspect. He looked upon religion as the great transformer of our narrow selfish life to one of charity and goodness. He believed in the philosophy of active life. He identified the service to the poor and the downtrodden as the worship of Daridra Narayana. It did a lot to translate the Vedantic ideal into all the planes of existence, social, economic, political and educational. He writes :

> 'I do not believe in a God or religion that cannot wipe the widow's tears and bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.'

Swami Vivekananda struck the tolerant note of Hinduism in all his speeches and letters. He declared :

> 'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man... Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this by work or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion.'

The Swamiji introduced a genuine missionary spirit into Hinduism. He equated service and worship into one. In an important letter he wrote :

> 'For our motherland a synthesis of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam — Vedantic brain and Islamic body are necessary.'

It is through the great efforts and inspiring leadership of the Swamiji that the Ramakrishna movement has come to stay. Vivekananda has been the inspiration to many of our great leaders e.g. Dr Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhiji and others. Vivekananda is our first religious leader, awakening us to the evils in our national life. He declared :

> 'Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and it was one of the causes of our fall in the past and if we continued the neglect the result would not be different.'

He attacked the caste-system in the most forcible manner. He writes :

> 'India's doom was sealed the very day the caste-system was invented and stopped free communion with one another. No man, no nation can hate others and live.'

There can be no happiness for any of us until it is won for all. The great Swamiji died at the young age of 39.

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SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

SWAMI RITAJANANDA

Spiritual enlightenment may be defined as the goal of religion. In all the great movements in religion, the reformations, the developments of new cults and the formation of new creeds, there has always been someone who came as a prophet or messenger of God. Sometimes he expressed his message openly, sometimes he gave it to a few chosen and intimate followers. When he made a deep impression on people by his life and actions, and convinced them that his message had a special value, they came to adore him and accepted him as the leader in their religious life. Not all prophets manifested a desire to go around rousing the world, but they all had the power to generate individual groups and to give them a new, inspiring faith in spiritual ideals.

History shows that the core of religion is often related to higher values and that it demands great sacrifices. On the other hand, there is the worldly life and human nature itself, which tend to keep humanity busy with things of the world and which make immediate objects more attractive than the rewards of virtue or piety. Consequently, no society for centuries has ever held firmly and closely to any religious ideal. All high ideals are seen, in the course of time, to have been compromised to worldly situations. In modern times the outer forms of religion have assumed greater importance than the inner substance, for these are easier to hold to. New interpretations have appeared explaining the truths or teachings of the prophets to suit the times. Scriptures have been intellectualized to a great extent and they serve as a diversion rather than for spiritual inspiration. If they fail to keep alive an interest in higher values, it is because there are no men and women who live up to them and exhibit in their lives the results of following them.

With our rapid advance in scientific knowledge, we have learned to look at the world purely from the level of intellect. The discoveries of man's inner nature, his conditioned behaviour pattern, blood chemistry, mental functions, etc., have made the study of man more and more challenging. Investigation of the complicated activity of the brain has made us feel that we are living in a 'brave new world' which we can shape and alter according to our needs.

Thus the modern world has created a fairyland, where everything is fascinating, and there is hardly any time to look for anything beyond the sense perceptions. Our way of thinking, also, has become altered by these conditions, so that we are unable to see eye to eye with the older approaches. One main defect in this new orientation is that man is not becoming stronger, but weaker. With cars produced in large numbers, we are slowly becoming less capable of using our legs. When machinery replaces manual labour, the hands lose their flexibility and usefulness. In the same manner, when we seek comfort and pleasure we are weakened. Like a rocket we are all brilliant and radiant, shine for a while, and fade away.

Religion has never paid much attention to success in these material fields. The great teachers felt it was harmful for spiritual development to become involved in worldly affairs because, being fascinated by the wonders one discovers and creates, one is prone to neglect the spirit in the process. Consequently they all said: 'What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and to forget his soul?' They made a great distinction between the realm of the spirit and the world. To follow them is to give up the world and attain the inner, spiritual life. The same is true even to this day. If spiritually minded people did not have the courage of their convictions about the spiritual life, why should thousands of them be drawn in search of it? Although the words of great teachers do not inspire all people, they do open to some a new field of study — a quest for

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the verification of the ideals taught by the select few who have laid stress on matters of eternal value, in contrast to the advantage of the material world.

We shall examine this question: What is it that people seek in religion and what is the knowledge they get, which is said to be the religious ideal?

Since the path itself is different from the path of the world, the scenes that come before us are also different. For example, while walking over level ground one gets a view of the surrounding country which is not identical with the view one gets when one climbs a mountain. To a person who has never climbed a mountain, the view of the landscape from there is unintelligible and impossible to believe. In the same manner supersensory experiences are difficult to explain to a person who has never had one. Often the extraordinary perceptions of saints and mystics do not belong to normal life. The new knowledge they get is achieved by the mind itself, when its ordinary functions are properly trained. This type of knowledge cannot be shared directly, but one can be guided and directed so that he or she is able to get it personally, from within themselves. 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, "Lo here!" or "Lo there!", for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17). All of us have to seek it and with persistent effort find it for ourselves.

The Katha Upanishad (II. ii. 14) says: 'The sages realize that indescribable Supreme Joy as "This is That".' Not by verbal knowledge nor through inference does one realize it, but by direct and immediate experience. Similar texts can be gathered from the words of many saints and sages in all religions. The purpose is to give us a conviction that Spiritual Enlightenment is a reality, and a possibility for all people.

Buddha refers to this as Nirvana, which is equivalent to Salvation, or the goal of religion. But one has to achieve it by one's own efforts. When the mind is free from cravings, Buddha says, one realizes that he has attained release. Being a deep mystic experience, it influences our intellectual and emotional nature. One of its characteristics is said to be of the nature of bliss, although even this word is hard to explain, since we often mistakenly identify bliss with happiness.

Certain texts refer to this higher experience as mystical, as an ecstasy, etc. but these terms are inadequate and perhaps even confusing. Rational thinkers, hearing such terms, brush them aside, saying: 'If the purpose of religion is to go into a state of joy, a forgetfulness of this world of sorrows and to enter a world of dreams, it can be done without the help of austerities and disciplines. One can easily induce such states by chemical means. We can dream of heavens and all the joys of a paradise by inhaling certain drugs.' The first and foremost point to remember is that the state of bliss referred to by the sages is very different. The picture on a motion picture screen is not the same as a picture painted on a canvas. The first is unreal, though it has the semblance of reality; it is merely projected on the screen. It can be made to disappear by shutting off the light or removing the film. But the painted canvas is real. It is a part of the canvas. In the same manner the bliss of realization, even if we look at it from the ordinary experience of happiness, cannot be altered. It never dulls with the passing of time but is something constant, until the supporting personality itself is destroyed or damaged.

Secondly, this realization is the result of work, and is an end attainable through a fixed course. The disciplines of yoga, mental and physical, culminate in this, as does the path of devotion, which ends finally with the overpowering love for God. The spiritual experience comes as a culmination of the efforts of the aspirant and is necessary to give a meaning and purpose to what we do here on earth.

In the Buddhist scripture called Majjina Nikaya (Rathavrinita) there is a dialogue between Sariputta and Purna. Sariputta asked the latter, who was intent upon a meditative life, whether he was leading the religious life for purity of morals, or for purity of the mind,

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or for purity of views, or purity in overcoming doubts, or for purity of knowledge, or for knowledge and insight into the Path. He answered 'No' to each question. 'But,' he said, 'I am doing meditations for attaining Nirvana without support.' Since this is not possible without the other qualities, he was asked to explain.

'Friend,' Purna replied, 'if the Lord had preached purity of morals, purity of the mind and the rest, as being the attainment of Nirvana without support, then he would have preached that the attaining of Nirvana without support exists along with grasping (i.e. with desires for enjoyment). And if the attainment of Nirvana without support were apart from these things, then the ordinary man might win Nirvana, for the ordinary man is without them. But all these are like relays, one helping to reach the other and finally the last stage being the attainment of Nirvana.'

Buddha said that religious life is lived as plunged in Nirvana. Nirvana is its aim and end. There is nothing beyond it. He describes it as follows (Udana, VIII. 1-4) :

> 'There is, monks, the stage where there is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor wind, nor the stage of infinity of consciousness, nor the stage of nothingness... neither this world nor the other world, nor sun and moon, neither coming nor going, neither staying nor passing away nor arising. This indeed is the end of pain.'
>
> 'Hard to see, without turning away from enjoyments, indeed.
> It is a truth not easy to see;
> Mastered is craving for him who knows,
> Nothing is there for him who knows . . .'

This description of Nirvana is akin to the realization referred to in the Upanishads. The ultimate experience is indescribable. It is beyond everything we understand with our senses or mind. The Ultimate Truth is incomprehensible. It can be referred to only as, 'Not this, not this.' But still it is not 'nothing', but a positive experience, where a person comes to a new knowledge of himself and the world. He cannot make himself understood because he tells of something which is of a different language. It is neither physical nor mental. It has nothing to do with getting into a state of inertia or absolute trance, nor is it an expression of genius nor intellect. All these explanations can only baffle our imagination, since it is not related to anything in our daily experience.

That God in his pure essence is indescribable has been felt by many people. St. Augustine said : 'Man can know what God is not and not what He is.' The Advaita Vedanta tells us Brahman has to be sought by the 'Not this, not this' method. In any case the ultimate truth, if accepted as infinite, cannot be a personality. Personality is a limitation, although for a human mind, which can think only in concrete terms, personality is helpful for spiritual life. Men of realization, from the example of their lives, point out that Spiritual Enlightenment is a state in which only some of the qualities attributed to God are manifest in themselves. Love, one of the commonest features found in all of them, which is beyond all distinctions, is an expression of the highest type and has a magical power of influencing the lives of all who come under its power.

Spiritual Enlightenment is an experience brought to a person by an intensely contemplative life. The importance of contemplation has been stressed by all who have known or walked with God. Even in the non-theistic Eightfold Path of Buddha the last discipline is right concentration. For the religious person, where the helpful method of accepting a Personal God is present, the concentration is directed toward that God. The Upanishads have repeatedly said :

> 'Atman, smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the hearts of all living creatures. A man who is free from desires beholds the majesty of the Self through tranquillity of the senses and the mind, and becomes free from grief.' (Katha I. ii. 20).
>
> 'The wise man, who by means of concentration on the Self, realizes that ancient, effulgent One who is hard to be seen, unmanifest, hidden, and who dwells in the buddhi and rests in the body—he, indeed, leaves joy and sorrow far behind.' (Katha. I. ii. 12.).

The final knowledge is traced to the world within oneself rather than to an external God.

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Some Christian mystics have referred to this experience as the discovery of the Christ within. Some said it was a rebirth, a new life, a manifestation of God or a total surrender of oneself to the Lord, who takes charge of the devotee and works out His will. Some have called it absorbed meditation or *Samadhi*, while others have described it as ecstasy or a beatific vision, a divine communion or a feeling of the divine presence. The variety of language and images used by different mystics gives no clue to understanding the process.

The nature of this experience will ever remain a sealed book, whatever may be said by different scholars. There is no possibility of connecting this intuitive, direct knowledge with the logical thinking of the mind. Those who insist that sense perception alone gives valid knowledge cannot have a correct estimate either of themselves or the outside world, and this is the view of thinkers who use powers beyond the senses and arrive at inferential knowledge. Likewise, the man who has attained knowledge through insight finds that all other methods reveal knowledge far below the knowledge he gets. It is not a matter for argument. We can never argue with a blind man about the colour of a rose, which does not exist for him. In view of this, Buddha never tried to describe the experience of Nirvana.

St. Teresa said, after such a knowledge, that her seeing God, whether it was correct or not, could not be explained. She could not of course recognize this as God because she had not seen Him before, but had only heard of Him. 'Yet I could certainly affirm it, for though He remains unseen, so clear a knowledge is impressed upon the soul that to doubt it seems quite impossible. The Lord is pleased that this knowledge should be so deeply engraved upon the understanding, that one can no more doubt it than one can doubt the evidence of one's eyes — indeed, the latter is easier, for we sometimes suspect that we have imagined what we see. Whereas here, though the suspicion may arise for a moment, there remains such complete certainty that the doubt has no more force.'

Ramakrishna told the doubting Naren : 'I have seen God. I see Him as I see you here, only more clearly.'

God can be seen, but not with our eyes. We may not believe in any other eyes than these, which can create illusions and whose powers are limited, yet we have to admit that people for centuries have been speaking about such a wondrous state. The eyes are only instruments and the real seeing is done by the mind. When the mind is made tranquil, freed from all disturbing activities, it does not assert itself, but yields its place to something far superior to itself. Then a new life starts, where ignorance and desires become extinct and insight and calmness take their place. For those who have never had any experience of this peace beyond all understanding, it hardly enters their thoughts or touches the fringes of their imagination. Everything connected with this life of ours is left once and for all, and we move to a region and state in which sorrows are removed forever. If it were only a temporary peace and state of joy, it would wear out and disappear. But it is a permanent state. Some have called the life after enlightenment the true and natural life of the soul, in comparison with which the ordinary life is a hypnotised one of darkness and illusion.

Although the process of enlightenment is hard to describe, it leaves its mark by the transformation brought to a person's character. The Hindus have often compared it to the transmutation of base metal to gold by the touch of the philosopher's stone. This process is not a gilding that wears off, but a total and complete alteration in the nature of the base metal. An iron sword becomes a golden sword, and gets the qualities of gold in all respects, yet keeps the outer shape. Now the sword's worth is not for its value as a weapon but for the precious metal it contains. It is no more valuable as a sword, because it has become soft. The external man remains the same individual, but he has undergone an extraordinary transformation. His position in society goes higher. The saint has become gentler and more worthy than all others. His value has gone up.

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This mark of the inner transformation alone should give us a proper evaluation of religion in our lives. Enlightenment has conferred upon him a unique distinction. He becomes capable of enjoying a unique freedom. The freedom of a liberated soul is, again, something never known or experienced by people who have not attained that state. Patanjali, the composer of the Yoga aphorisms, has referred to it as Kaivalya. Buddha referred to it as Nirvana. In the Dhammapada, there is a description of this state. The bliss of Nirvana is explained as the life of happiness, hating none in the midst of those who hate: 'We dwell free from hate among men who hate.' Possessing nothing, it is a life free from care . . .

> 'Victory breeds hatred; the conquered dwell in sorrow. He who has given up (thoughts of both) victory and defeat, he is calm and lives happily.
>
> 'There is no fire like passion, no ill like hatred; there is no sorrow like physical existence (individuality); there is no happiness higher than tranquillity.
>
> 'Greediness is the worst of diseases; propensities are the worst of sorrows. To him who has known this, truly Nirvana is the highest bliss...'

Thus, after such an experience, the person loses all the tendencies that fetter one to a life lived at the mercy of passions, attachments and hatred. The greeds and lusts that plague a human being are no longer present. The person who has been cruel and wicked does not have any more of those qualities. Sri Ramakrishna used to illustrate this by saying that when the sword has become golden it cannot be used for cutting any more. In this state all the problems of life and death are solved, all perplexing questions are answered, and doubts and anxieties cease forever. This brings to the person an extraordinary calmness preventing the manifestation of all conflicts.

For most of us, our inability to cope with the struggles of a competitive civilization is due to an unbalanced and incorrect approach to the problem. Our minds are already tied to various other problems and much of its energy is wasted in adjustment alone. Under these conditions, a person has no peace of mind to think clearly, nor the energy to work without feeling tired. Taking a common illustration, we all know how one becomes filled with energy and joy when he has to do something which he likes: the benefits are assured. This only indicates that we do have the power to work with the feeling of joy. But we do not know how to start. We do not feel such a state in all our activities and associations. The reason is due to our individuality, which makes distinctions between one activity and another and between one person and another.

To the enlightened man, however, having transcended the ego, the whole world is a completely integrated one. He sees no conflicts, no jarring notes to disrupt the wonderful symphony that is going on everywhere. The more a person is conscious of individual notes, the more he fails to enjoy the concert music; and this may be studied even in relation to our body, our thinking, our daily living, and our relationship with others.

We are told that enlightenment makes a man see the divinity around him. The harmony behind this divinity is clear and hence the man of realization becomes part of the universe and feels that he is in all and that all is in him. Enlightenment is often compared to a state of infinite expansion. The mind is liberated from its finite anxieties. When it has lost all of its distinctive and isolating marks, it becomes the possessor of new strength and new joy. 'When passions are stilled and all worldly joys are silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul,' said Meister Eckhart. The voice of God, it should be noted, is not expressed in words as much as in actions. The saints worked night and day to draw the attention of people to this new life, to the message of hope, the message that ends all suffering and brings indestructible joy and peace incomprehensible.

Up to now, no one has unfolded the meaning of this experience, or understood it. But all have found that the change manifested in these people signifies something of extraordinary value. Perhaps there is an alteration in the blood cells or in the brain function. Physiologists and psychologists might eventually test the body of the saint from this standpoint.

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Nevertheless, history has proved that these people are worthy of being worshipped. For they have brought to humanity something which is in great and unique demand, and something which science has not been able to supply.

Although these illumined persons could not be fully understood by others, they drew people to themselves like a magnet attracting particles of iron. They gave to them their power. Thus the world has been witnessing a unique phenomenon in the spiritual field, that one great religious founder starts a movement but it does not die with him, as he is succeeded by disciples and the chain is kept unbroken. His message continues to inspire generation after generation and rouses the inherent desire of people to seek God.

Still, whether we get the idea indirectly or by study, neither the scriptures nor even the masters can give us the final illumination in a lasting manner. That has to be achieved by our own efforts, though the teachers can take us close to it. This point was effectively brought out by the wonderful anecdote in the life of Buddha. His closest disciple was Ananda, who had the special privilege of attending on his master for years. When Buddha was about to leave his body, Ananda could not bear the thought of his death and burst into tears, to the surprise of Buddha, for a man of realization is not bound by worldly feelings and should be above them. The advice Buddha gave him may be read in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta :

> 'Have I not already... told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them ? Leave them, sever ourselves from them. How then, Ananda, can this be possible—whereas anything whatever born, brought into being and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how then can this be possible that such a being should not be dissolved ?... For a long time you have been very near to me by words of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ananda ! Be earnest in your effort and you shall soon be free from the great evils : from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion and ignorance ! '

These words are very significant in explaining what enlightenment does for a person. It also points out how an enlightened person is free from illusions and false values. Realization is indeed a majestic state, where every object of human relationship appears in a new colour and with a force indescribable.

We have been observing the subject of spiritual enlightenment more in terms of its universal nature, as presented by great teachers, in order to point out that religions do show a man a way of attaining the highest values while living on earth. It is the saints who are the best representatives of a religion, and not the codes or the creeds. Spiritual Enlightenment brings to us the true message of God with greater power and beauty. It requires no cleverness — and indeed, often intellectual cleverness has put a great barrier to our listening to the words of the Lord, who speaks from within us, when we are in the proper condition. The demands may be great — the sacrifice and total denial of everything we cling to on earth ; but we get something in return which is beyond price. It blesses those who get it and it blesses even those who have met such people, who have seen them or even read their words. We can only repeat the farewell words of Buddha :

> 'Decay is inherent in all component things, but the truth will remain for ever. Work out your salvation with diligence.'

As a lamp brought into a room that has been dark for a thousand years illumines it immediately, the light of Jnana illumines the Jiva, and dispels his age-long ignorance.

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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PRANAYAMA—ITS SIGNIFICANCE

T. S. RAGHAVAN

From the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, one can easily realise that Swami Vivekananda is the 'revealer, the interpreter to India of the treasures that she herself possesses in herself.' And we can also say that he acts as the confluence of the two main immense rivers of thought — the Eastern and the Western — the Orient and the Occident. The words and writings of Swami Vivekananda are like a rock where Hinduism could be at anchor — like a charter of Hindu faith. He says :

> 'If one religion be true, then all the others also must be true. Thus the Hindu Faith is yours as much as mine. We know that all religions alike, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are but so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite.'

So there exist humanity and truth, if man becomes divine by realising the Infinite. During the process of such a realisation, it is to be borne in mind that man possesses in himself inherently both truth that is lower and higher and he is not travelling from error to truth but climbing up from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. He wants truth that is material as well as absolute and wants to experience that absolute truth for himself. When he has grasped it, realised it and felt it within his heart of hearts, then alone he is beyond all doubts, never in darkness and crookedness that hinder his march towards the goal.

The science of Raja yoga proposes to give us such a means to observe the internal states and to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching this truth. Raja yoga consists of the eight steps — Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prānāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāranā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. Of these, Pranayama forms the subject of the present article as it is the switchboard to the science of Raja yoga.

Pranayama means the control of Prana — the vital force in every being. Pranayama is not, as many would think, something about the breath alone, although it can be related. Breathing, as we may know presently, is only a means to get to the real Pranayama.

From thought down to the lowest force, every thing is but the manifestation of Prana. So the knowledge *per se* of this Prana is Pranayama. Knowledge is power and we have to acquire this power, if we desire the fruit of Raja yoga. We get at power only through restrictions self-imposed, that means by effective control of the instruments of knowledge. As Swamiji says :

> 'Just as knowing that knowing which we shall know everything, similarly knowing this Prana, one has grasped all the forces of the Universe, mental or physical. He who has controlled the Prana has controlled his body and all the bodies that exist, because the Prana is the generalised manifestation of force.'

It follows, therefore, that the most obvious manifestation of this Prana in the human body is the motion of the lungs and the controlling of such a motion of the lungs is Pranayama. As Prana moves the lungs, the movement of the lungs draws in the air by pump action. There is thus a muscular power which moves the lungs. In other words, the muscular power which goes out through the nerves to the muscles and from them to the lungs making them move in a certain manner is also the Prana, which we have to control in the practice of the Pranayama. When the Prana is controlled, all other actions of the Prana in the body will slowly come under control. When we don't have it or the balance of Prana is disturbed what we call disease is produced.

Pranayama is therefore not breathing but at the same time it cannot be said they are not related. The breath is that flywheel supplying

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and regulating the motive power to everything in this body. We know very little of what is happening inside the body. We can know of them only when the mind becomes more subtle and enters, as it were, deeper into the body. To get the subtle perception, we have to begin with the grosser perceptions. We have to get hold of that which is setting the whole engine in motion. That is the Prana, the most obvious manifestation of which is the breath. Then along with the breath we shall slowly enter the body; which will enable us to find out about the subtle forces, the nerve currents that are moving all over the body. As soon as we perceive them and learn to feel them we shall begin to get control over them and over the body. The mind is also set in motion by these different nerve currents so at last we shall reach that state of perfect control over the body and the mind, when both of them become our servants. The aim, the end and the goal of all these training is the liberation of the soul.

The reason why breathing is practised is to breathe uniformly and from such rhythmical breathing develops a tendency of all molecules in the body to move in the same direction. Consequently, when the mind changes at will, nerve currents also change into a motion 'something like' electricity. When all the motions of the body have become perfectly rhythmical, the body, as it were, becomes a gigantic battery of will. This tremendous will is what exactly the Yogi wants, to attain the fruition of Yoga. It tends to bring a rhythmic action in the body, and helps him through the respiratory centre to control the other centres.

It may be construed that the aim of Pranayama here is to rouse the coiled-up power called Kundalini in the muladhara — the base of the spinal column. If one can make the current pass upwards through the sushumna, the canal in the middle of the spinal column, to the sahasrara, then he has solved the problem. 'The mind has made this net-work of the nervous system and has to break it, so that no wires will be required to work through. Then alone, will all knowledge come to us, no more bondage of body; that is why it is so important that we should get control of that sushumna'. This sushumna is in ordinary persons closed at the lower extremity, no action comes through it. The yogi proposes a practice by which it can be worked and the nerve current made to travel through. Thus the rousing of Kundalini which is the province of Pranayama is the one and only way for attaining Divine Wisdom. And it has been said that the mind whose dross has been cleared away by Pranayama becomes fixed in Brahma and therefore Pranayama has been enjoined.

THE POWER OF THE DIVINE WORD

(in Language-Study as Sadhana)

SISTER SAVITRI

The great world religions, though differing in their paths and means for the attainment of the ultimate goal of life, emphasize however uniformly the Power of the Divine Word. The fourth Gospel of the Christians, for instance, starts thus: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' In the Hebrew Scriptures the Word of God is likewise conceived of having creative power. In the Genesis God says: 'Let there be Light, and there was Light.' In the Veda again it is said: 'In the beginning was Brahman, with Him was the Word as second. And the Word is Brahman.' In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad this idea is developed further: 'By that Vāk and that Ātman He created all things whatsoever, the Vedas, Metres, Sacrifices and all Creatures.'

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Whereas in the first-mentioned religions the Power of the Divine Word and its effect is merely put as a statement, it is in India that we find a very ancient science as basis of this statement — the Mantra Shāstras containing a very detailed description of the Sound and its Power developed from its primordial Cause. This all-encompassing subject of the Power of the Divine Word is certainly of greatest importance for all Sādhanā and most fascinating. Those who are interested to study it in detail, will find a very clear survey of it in Sir John Woodroffe's book *Garland of Letters*. Here I can give only a few fundamental points of it, as far as it is necessary for our own problem — in which different ways this Power of the Divine Word can be of help to us in our Sādhanā.

Many of those who have practised Sadhana for a longer period of time, will have noticed that it can become rather difficult to keep the mind one-pointedly concentrated on their Chosen Ideal. The mind wants by nature variety; therefore, sooner or later, the moment may come when it either starts to run away in all directions or it will become dull. To bring it back by force is a somehow doubtful expedient, and only a very few sadhakas will succeed in it, for already Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita regarding the mind: 'It is as obstinate as a horse', and consequently compulsion will produce often just the opposite of the desired result namely, an increase of obstinacy. So, what is to be done?

We have to find ways and means to satisfy the mind's desire for variety, so that it remains by itself at the feet of God. For the solution of this problem we find a very helpful suggestion in one of Sri Ramakrishna's talks with Doctor Sarkar under whose treatment he was at that time due to a very painful cancer in the throat.

> *Sri Ramakrishna*: 'Please cure my illness. I cannot chant the Names and Glories of God.'
> *Dr. Sarkar*: 'Meditation is enough.'
> *Sri Ramakrishna*: 'What do you mean! Why should I get monotonous! I eat my fish in various dishes: curried fish, fried fish, pickled fish, and so forth! Sometimes I worship God with rituals, sometimes I repeat His Name, sometimes I meditate on Him, sometimes I sing His Names and Glories, sometimes I dance taking His Name.'

If we follow these words of Sri Ramakrishna trying to practise sadhana in as many different forms as we can think of, then the mind will get its desired variety and will much easily, quite by itself, remain at the feet of God. With this in view I want to suggest one more form of sadhana, out of my own experience, and that is the study of certain languages under certain conditions. But as this kind of language-study is also based on the Power of the Divine Word, I have at first to bring a few more fundamental points from the Mantra Shastras.

The Sanskrit word 'vāk', derived from the root 'vāch' to speak, means word, and this Vak is the Sakti of Brahman, His dynamic Power and inseperable from Him. She manifests Herself in each and everything that exists — creating, maintaining and destroying. In Her gross aspect, 'Vaikhari Vak', She takes the form of the spoken letters.

Of these letters of the Sanskrit alphabet it is said in the Tantra Tattva (II. 45):

> 'The string of fifty letters from A to Ksha, which are the Matrikas, is Eternal, unbeginning and unending and Brahman Itself.'

It is these letters of which, single or in certain combinations, Mantras are constituted, which contain a special manifestation of Her Power, though Vaikhari Sakti is in every sound. We have to understand this in the same way as Sri Ramakrishna gave explanation regarding Incarnations, saying: 'No doubt, God is in everything; but the greatest manifestation of His Power is through an Incarnation.'

In the *Garland of Letters* we find a further explanation:

> 'An ordinary collection of words is something gross. These as all else are forms of Sakti. But the Mantra is the Devata Himself or Herself in Mantra-body. Mantra is thus a mass of radiant energy.' (p. 259).

And further on Sir John Woodroffe says:

> 'In the case of Puja, Dhyana, and other Sadhanas, it is only the Sadhaka's Sadhana-Sakti which operates, whilst in the case of Mantra-Sadhana,

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Sadhana-Sakti works in conjunction with *Mantra-Sakti* which is all-powerful and re-inforces Sadhana-Sakti which is imperfect and meets with obstacles. It is because Mantra possesses this wonderful power that a Jiva can, it is said, accomplish that which appears impossible.' (p. 263).

That the inherent Power of the Names of God can be made manifest by Japa is a well-known fact based on innumerable experiences since thousands of years in India. Of course, the Sakti or latent Power of the Mantra must first be awakened by knowing its meaning, that is, the object for which the Mantra is a symbol, and by knowing its proper intonation, i.e., sound and rhythm. It is therefore self-understood that Mantras cannot be translated. Not even the meaning can be rendered to in its full extent in any translation, not to speak of the sound and rhythm. And this fact does not only apply to the Language but also to the proper script of this language. There comes a moment, after having studied Sanskrit for some time, when any Sanskrit-word seen in Roman transcription, seems to have changed its whole character to such an extent that it simply looks grotesque and unbearable. I think there is no doubt, at least among serious sadhakas in East and West, that the study of Sanskrit is of highest importance for every person who aspires a thorough understanding of the Holy Scriptures of India. This study of Sanskrit is certainly not merely a common language-study. For Sanskrit is surcharged with Divine Power for, as it is said of its string of letters in the above mentioned Tantra Tattva, 'It is unbeginning and unending and Brahman Itself.' Therefore the study of Sanskrit, done in the proper attitude of mind, is certainly a form of Sadhana, and I can only tell out of my own experience that I felt it to be a form of meditation.

Now let us go one step further and see, what result we may attain if we apply the above-mentioned facts to the words of Incarnations in general, and in our special case, to those of Sri Ramakrishna. An Incarnation — as generally agreed upon — is God Himself who now and then manifests Himself in a human body for the benefit of humanity. There have been recorded in the different religions many miraculous effects of their Divine Power produced by their sight, touch and word. As they are God Himself, there cannot be any difference between the Power of the Word of God, as quoted in the beginning, and the Power of the words of an Incarnation. Consequently by studying the Words of an Incarnation in His own language, specially, if He is our Ishtadevata, our Chosen Ideal, we certainly shall come thereby into contact with a very strong current of Divine Power. And this again will have the same effect on our Sadhana as Mantra-Sakti, i.e., this Divine Power accumulated in the Words of an Incarnation will reinforce our own Sadhana-Sakti and help us to overcome all obstacles on our path. In addition to this I can tell from my own experience that there is a world of difference between reading Sri Ramakrishna's talks with his disciples in English translation and reading them in his own language. Primarily, as in the case of Sanskrit, there are always subtle shades of the meaning which we can only grasp in the original language, but which cannot be properly rendered in a translation. Next, the very idea of reading or listening to *His Own Words* is simply overwhelming. And even though we cannot hear the sound of Sri Ramakrishna's voice, we can however hear and learn that of his mother-tongue — Bengali — which is very soft and melodious, and which confers to us at least the sound of his mother-tongue in general. Bengali is — so to say — a daughter of Sanskrit, derived from it and containing many Sanskrit words, though in course of time it has developed its own characteristic features and has become an independent highly literary language. But all the same, it kept its charming simplicity of expression which scarcely can be rendered in any translation. That is why the original of the Gospel reveals so much more to us of Sri Ramakrishna's Personality — of his Divine and human nature, of his continuous gliding from one of these states into the other, of his permanently being at the threshold between Nitya and Leela, between the Absolute and Its

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Sport, and finally of his unfathomable Love and bewitching charm, that in course of time one cannot help feeling that His Words contain indeed His Living Presence till to-day. By means of all this the obstinate mind gets enough variety to remain absorbed in His wonderful Personality. And who knows, listening intently to His Own Words and having thereby continuously the benefit of their powerful influence, we may even once be granted by His Grace to hear Sri Ramakrishna's own 'sweet voice'.

BUDDHISM IN BURMA

BRAHMACHARI SARADA CHAITANYA

Burma is one of the three Theravada countries of the world, other two being Ceylon and Thailand. In Burma religion is still a living force. From birth to death a Burman's life is regulated by the precepts of Buddha. In Asia the impact of western civilisation has shaken the faith of many an educated soul from the time-old social and religious practices of their own. There is a tendency in many who have come under the influence of glittering western civilisation to demonstrate ultra-modernism in their taste, dress and manner. But in this respect, I think, Burma is an exception. No outside influence could rob a Burman of his faith in Phaya, the Buddha, and His Dhamma. However modern, a Burman will never feel ashamed to don the robe as he is enjoined by his religion and go out begging in sun and shower. And that too he will do, not for the fear of any social sanction but from a spontaneous response from within. This shows that the religion in Burma is still living and living with honour. That the religion in Burma is a living force will be evident from the fact that thousands and thousands of Pagodas throughout the country are well maintained and well cared for; that innumerable number of monks are looked after by the society with love, honour and reverence; that the state being secular in nature could find scope to build an artificial cave at Kaba Aye, near Rangoon, in commemoration of the Sixth Buddhist Council held in 1954 at a cost of nine million Kyats (Indian Rupees). This they claim to be a wonder of the world. And all these have been possible only because the religion of the country is still in a dynamic state and the people take active interest in matters of religion.

How Buddhism came to Burma and who was instrumental in bringing the message of Buddha to this land of Suvannabhumi, as it was known in ancient times, is still in the womb of mystery. However, there are many opinions, both hearsay and historical, current about the introduction of Buddhism in Burma. In the opinion of Pannasami, the monk author of Sasanavamsa, Buddha himself came to Sudhammapura, the modern Thaton, in the eighth year after he had gained the highest wisdom, with many hundred monks. This view of Pannasami has no historical support behind it. And the students of Burmese history consider his view as wishful thinking of an orthodox follower of the Great One.

The second view regarding the introduction of Buddhism in Burma is Asoka Mission. It is said and mentioned in the Kalyani inscription of Pegu that after the third council at Pataliputra a Mission was sent to Burma for the propagation of Buddhism by Moggaliputta Mahathera, the teacher of Asoka and the convener of third council. Thera Sona and Uttara were the twin members of this Mission. Apart from Kalyani inscription we find a mention of this Asoka Mission in Sasanavamsa too. According to Sasanavamsa 'Elder Sona and Uttara came to Burma 235 years after the Blessed One had attained parinibbana'. True we find a mention of this Asoka Mission in

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the Kalyani inscription which is considered to be a source material of Burmese history; but it is not universally accepted as authentic for in the Rock Edicts of Asoka there is no mention of this so-called Mission. But some are of opinion that there is no reason why one should totally disbelieve Sona and Uttara Mission. Even if we consider this to be legendary we cannot but give some credit to it. Because behind every legend there lurks a shadow of truth. Anyway, it is yet to be ascertained how and when Buddhism really made its way into Burma. And it is also sure that unless any archaeological evidence brings in new light, this will ever remain to be a puzzle for the students of Burmese history. However, the information we get from the archaeological objects dug out from the ruins of Prome, Pegu and Thaton it is clear that Buddhism became well established in these regions of Lower Burma during 5th century A.D. And it is also clear the message of Buddha, which subsequently flooded the whole of Burma, first came from Krishna-Godavari regions of Southern India.

Inhabitants of Prome, Pegu and Thaton were mostly Mons. Even to-day Mons are majority in these regions. And a move is afoot to form a separate Mon state within the Union of Burma. These Mons believe that they came to Burma from Krishna-Godavari region of India. They have a good number of lullabys where it is said : we come from the land of Krishna and Godavari. Since Mons were the first to accept Buddhism in Burma and since they count their descent from Southern India it is most probable that Buddhism was carried to Burma by the Mon immigrants who either for trade or for some other reasons might have migrated to these cities of Lower Burma.

Though Buddhism became well established in Lower Burma by 5th century A.D., as a religion Brahminism was first to come over here. And in all probability it too made its appearance through the same channel. Before the onslaught of Buddhism, Brahminism could not stand. It had to give way to its 'rebel child'. But a study of Buddhism in Burma as it stands to-day will reveal beyond doubt that Buddhism too in its turn could not help but making some concession to its mother religion — the Brahminism — before it could win over the people of Lower Burma. For even to-day Brahminical Gods such as Saraswati, Lakshmi and Ganapati command respect from the followers of Buddha in Burma. After the water festival in April, five Gods and Goddesses are worshipped with offerings etc. at Moulmein and Martaban regions. These are Vinayaka, Saraswati, Lakshmi, Mindra Devi and Chandi Devi. Out of these five I could not identify Mindra Devi. But the rest are well known Brahminical deities. Mindra Devi too, I believe, is a Brahminical Goddess and could be identified if a probe is made into it.

But the process of switching over from Brahminism to Buddhism was not always very smooth. There is evidence of occasional encounter between the followers of these two religions. Such a story has been narrated in the *Outline of Burmese History* by Mr. Harvey. In that story it has been shown how king Tissa of Pegu was converted to Buddhism after such an encounter. The story goes like this : Tissa 'was a heretic king' and 'made no obeisance to Buddha, to the Law he hearkened not, he honoured the Brahmanas. He threw down the images of Buddha, he cast them away into ditches and marshes'. One day Bhadra Devi, the maiden daughter of a merchant while taking bath in a pond perchance came across a statue of Buddha from under the water. She cleansed the image and installed it in a Pagoda. In no time the news reached the ears of the king. He sent for the girl and the girl appeared before the king. The king angrily ordered : 'Take her to the elephants that they may trample her to death'. She was taken to the elephants. But 'the elephants dared not tread on her'. Many elephants were engaged for this purpose but none dared to approach the girl who was constantly uttering the name of the Lord — the Buddha. Next she was put to fire. That too failed. For even the fire would not burn

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her. When all such attempts to kill her proved futile she was taken back to the king. And the king told her : 'If from the image of thy teacher (Buddha) there fly not up seven images, eight images, I will have thee cut into seven pieces.' The girl prayed to Buddha and eight images flew up into heaven to the astonishment of all. Now the girl in her turn asked the king if he could demonstrate such a thing with his God. The king proudly tried but could not. So in shame he banished all the false Gods he was so long worshipping and took refuge in Buddha. This story is a clear indication that an encounter was going on between Buddhism and Brahminism before the former could win over the people of Lower Burma to its side.

When Lower Burma or Mon countries were passing through such a revolution of great importance, Upper Burma remained contented with her Nats and Baby Nats — the ancestral spirits — and could know little of what was going on in her neighbouring zones. But the brilliant rays of Dhamma did not allow her to remain so for long. Shin Arahan, a monk from Ramanna, fired with the zeal of a true missionary went to Pagan and converted Anawrahta — the king — into Buddhism. It was eleventh century A.D. Anawrahta's conversion into Buddhism marks the ushering in of a new era — an era which brought into its train new hopes and aspirations for the people of Upper Burma. So long they were satisfied with their ancestral spirits but now they got a true perspective of a true religion. With Anawrahta came whole of Upper Burma within the fold of Buddhism. True the people of Upper Burma accepted Buddha and His Dhamma, but they could not give up the worship of Nats altogether. Buddhism had to step down and give sanction to the worship of Nats for that was the easiest way to get new converts into its fold. Even today in many houses, what to speak of in community worships, Nats are worshipped side by side with the Great One. Even from the State Nats are propitiated every year. But one thing should be noted, Burmans may worship Nats but in no consideration will they place them before Buddha. Buddha reigns supreme in their life. In the words of Mr Pratt, author of *India and Its Faith*, the Burman loves the Buddha but fears the Nats. The Buddha he knows will never harm him, but the Nats may !

With the conversion of Anawrahta into Buddhism different ethnic groups of Burma became united under the banner of Lord Buddha. And the message of Dhamma opened a new vista of life to the people at large. Buddhism — the most civilising factor of the day—not only gave to the inhabitants of Burma 'one of the purest faiths mankind has ever known', but also initiated her into the realm of 'world culture and civilization'. In the words of Dr Niharranjan Roy :

> To-day all that is beautiful and attractive in Burmese life and society and manners and customs come in fact from Buddhism. The religion gave them deeper thoughts to contemplate upon, higher principles to live for and nobler ideals to aspire after. It gave them a new outlook on life, and influenced the notions and beliefs of the average Burman to a considerable extent.
>
> (*Theravada Buddhism in Burma*, page 264).

Truly speaking, today's Burma is a gift of Buddhism ; is a creation of Buddhism. It is undeniable. It is irrefutable. Glory be unto Buddha, Glory be unto Dhamma, Glory be unto Sangha.

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer ?
Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry ?

— THE BUDDHA

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MATERIALIST PHILOSOPHY

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Life is just attraction and repulsion says the materialist as ironically described in one of the greatest of the scriptures of the world, the Bhagavad Gita. Like quick-lime on which water is poured, like potassium or sodium burning in water and splitting it, all life is a phenomenon of attraction and repulsion of matter, and there is nothing beyond the material, although sometimes something looks wonderful and different from matter. This is the materialist's position.

As a matter of fact this identification of material with spiritual phenomena, is no detraction of the spiritualist position. The materialist and his ally the scientist constantly seek to prove that spirit is matter. But on the other side there is a chuckle. Because if spirit is proved to be matter, the proof that matter is spirit is also progressing simultaneously. Those who believe in God and spirituality do not distinguish and isolate the material from the spiritual world. God, they believe, is in the material atom. It is God, they assert, that holds matter together and divides it sometimes. Water, light, sound, all these and other things, atoms, waves and quantums, are as spiritual and dependent on the universal almighty Power as the things of spirit, so distinguished and recognised. The Rishis looked on the water drops and the ever-moving air as manifestations of God and offered humble worship to every form and manifestation of that Power including tangible things. In their view the wonderful results of experiments and successful explorations into the laws of matter are all hymns to the Spirit that governs the universe. Thomas Henry Huxley, famous agnostic, when charged with being a materialist said in answer :

> 'Legitimate materialism, the extension of the conceptions and of the methods of physical science to the highest as well as the lowest phenomena of vitality, is neither more nor less than a sort of shorthand (reverse) idealism.'

A candle burning and the sun shining, a Sankaracharya's thoughts and a computer that adds up at a shop-counter, are all manifestations of the same Power and the same Law. The victories of science are victories for religion if we understand Huxley's paradox quoted above.

The old stupid attacks on icon-worship and on pantheism were based on a misconception of the faith of the prophets and the Rishis. The Satan complex of Semitic faiths is at the bottom of the objection to icons. It is believed that the icon competes with God as Satan did. Even if the objection be that images distract the attention of the devotee, it is groundless. Every holy symbol helps. Not a blade of grass nor an atom of hydrogen but is a manifestation of God. Put Bhakti and vision into it, and it becomes a *lingam* for worship of the Almighty. If God is immanent in all things, why should we not offer worship with an icon before us ? The daily Sandhya of the Hindus includes the sprinkling of water on one's head and a prayer in which worship is offered to the drops of water and reverent tributes are paid to this liquid manifestation of God. If there is no God but matter and you make it omnipotent, that is exactly what the pious man says, though in reverse form. It is not a detraction or denial but an odd way of enunciating the religious faith about the immanence of God if the scientists put infinite power into the material atom. An automatic machine is a wonderful thing, but it does not reduce or negative the wonder of the laws of nature that make and uphold the machine's work. And so also if the laws of nature are wonderful, they do not reduce but enhance the wonder of the great Law behind those laws, to which we give the name of God. Matter is wonderful, and beholding that wonder, the believers believe.

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CAN A CHRISTIAN REMAIN INDIAN?

MARK SUNDER RAO

The title was suggested by a discourse on 'Can India Become Christian?' The speaker, as could be imagined, was equivocal: Yes, he said, if certain conditions obtained; No, he said, if certain other conditions prevailed. In the end what he said was neither here nor there.

Be that as it may, there is no question, it seems to me, about India becoming Christian until the prior question can be affirmatively answered: the question at the head of this article.

This question cries for an answer because it is conceded on all sides that though the religion of Jesus was of Asiatic origin, when in the last two centuries and a half it was presented to the Indian people it wore a European garb; inevitably so. The resulting community was a conglomeration of co-existing denominations, true in most respects to their prototypes in the West.

Indeed, such was the zeal, even of Indian nationals who turned Christians, to maintain the Western forms, that a new adherent to Christian Faith was left with these alternatives: to sleep in the denominational procrustean bed and get mutilated or to remain a lone-wolf in his track, suspected of heresy. In certain cases it meant that unwillingness to adopt the denominational tyranny drove an individual right out of the Christian fold, back into his original community, in a state worse than his first.

This state of things has not always gone without being questioned. Some prophetic voices rang out demanding a complete change in outlook and practice. Among such was a group of Christians from several parts of the then Indian Empire who met in Serampore and on December 25, 1905 founded the National Missionary Society. Apart from its foundation belief that the Christian work should be done with Indian men and money in India, it proclaimed that it should evolve and adopt *indigenous* methods of communication.

How far this Society has gone in exploring *Indian* methods of practice of faith and its expression and is using them still remains a moot point. But this is not the theme of the article. We want to ask the question: If Indian Christians do want to adopt indigenous methods of thought and practice, what should they do?

In the first instance, they would have to study the history of the different faiths in India, how they arose, how they spread, how they decayed or how they yet survive. This study is basic.

As a next step, it might be asked: What forms of faith and practice have today survived in India and to what dynamic do they owe such survival? Having found the secret of such survival of Hindu faith, it ought to be possible for one to try and find out whether that genius can back Christian effort — in this country.

It seems to me, upon nearly three decades of study both of Christianity and of the Hindu systems, that, at one point there seems to be a possibility of give-and-take relationship. To confine ourselves to the point of this article, let us ask what are the fundamental modes of thought and practice that Christians in India cannot afford to ignore, if (i) they are to evolve an indigenous expression of their faith, and (ii) to survive as a dynamic force in the country.

The Vedanta and the Yoga are India's major contributions to the spiritual riches of the world. There are, of course, different schools of the Vedanta, as there are countless systems of Yoga. The latter will always remain a preserve of this country. But what is intended is a way of approaching Reality, God and how the nature of such Reality, God,

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is conceived. *This* matters more than the distinctions among different schools of thought.

I submit, therefore, that those Indian Christians who wish to remain *Indian* have but to address themselves to the task of understanding the genius of Indian Vedanta and Yoga. It is implied, as a matter of course, that the present author holds that there can be Indian *Christian* Vedanta and Yoga.

A Christian can remain an Indian to the extent he succeeds in being a Christian Vedantin and Yogin.

चरैवेति

SHIP'S CAPTAIN

Imagine a combination as follows: a wise man who reveals only as much as those around him can really grasp, an attendant who is not philosophically inclined, is therefore shut out from his master's philosophical discussions and can record only what he has heard or thinks he has known, and a historian who has his own manner and difficulties of presentation. Apollonius, Damis, and Philostratus constitute precisely such a combination,—a 'triple filter', as Dr Schnur calls it. We can be thankful that much valuable information has managed to pass through it and come down to us! We shall refer only to very few items from it.

The first one, chosen by Dr Schnur himself, is connected with 'transmigration of souls'. It is said that Apollonius was able to remember his previous 'incarnations'. In one he had been the captain of a ship. He had then behaved in a peculiar way. Phoenician pirates who intercepted his ship had made 'an offer' to him in return for letting the cargo and crew into their hands without the ordeal of a fight. Apollonius (rather, he who later incarnated as Apollonius) had then pretended to assent, having clearly visualized the consequences of an outright refusal. This had the result of throwing the enemies off their guard. He himself had remained alert, and when night fell, giving him an excellent cover, had slipped out, thereby saving both cargo and crew. According to Apollonius in his Nepal visit frame of mind, his conduct should have been different. For by the way he had acted, he had only abstained from wrong doing. It was not the same thing as 'doing justice'.

Dr Schnur explains the inner meaning of this 'dream-memory'. The ship, he says, is the Egyptian symbol of the soul,—exposed to danger and temptation. During these first forty-eight years of his life, had he, the 'pilot', put up active resistance to the evil around him? 'True, he had preached wisdom and virtue, but had consistently abstained from participation in politics; he had preferred the seclusion of temple groves to the admitted danger of the political arena.' One important result of the discussions on the 'cloud-girt mountain in Nepal' was to inspire him to 'determined opposition to the tyrannies of Nero and Domitian.'

* * *

To students of Indian lore, the idea of a philosopher functioning as a king, an administrator, or a commander in a field of battle will not appear strange at all. The names of Janaka, Rama, Krishna, Bhishma and many others who combined the highest spiritual illumination with the greatest efficiency as rulers and military men, dedicating their virtues for the 'welfare of all' will easily rush into their minds. It may be profitable to study what Samkara has to say while commenting on the *Gita* passage (III. 20) which

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declares : 'By action only, indeed, did Janaka and others try to attain perfection. Even with a view to the protection of the masses thou shouldst perform (action).' Says the Āchārya : 'The wise Kshatriyas of old, such as Janaka and Asvapati, tried by action alone to attain Moksha (*Sam-siddhi*). If they were persons possessed of right knowledge, then we should understand that, since they had been engaged in works, they tried to reach Moksha with action, *i.e.*, without abandoning works, with a view to setting an example to the world. If, on the other hand, such men as Janaka were persons who had not attained right knowledge, then, (we should understand) they tried to attain Moksha through action which is the means of attaining purity of mind (*Sattva-suddhi*).' Here we have to remember the principle that all disciplines, as a matter of fact, lead only to mental purity. Human effort ends there. What happens to the pure mind is that Truth flashes into it *of Its own accord*. Truth is not a fruit pulled down with the aid of limited human mental exertions.

In the case of people of the right temperament, therefore, political activities can in the beginning become a means for mental purity (and illumination), while in the case of those already illumined, those same activities can be open channels for expressing their wisdom,—God's grace, in religious terms—for the welfare of all. There need not and should not, be any sense of contradiction between the attitudes adopted in temple groves and in day-to-day work done in a spirit of 'dedicated service'.

भग चरैवेति । **SUBANDHU**

We express again our indebtedness to Dr Schnur for the facts about Apollonius.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Swami Budhananda of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, is a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*.

Sri R. K. Murti is from Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore.

Dr P. Nagaraja Rao is Professor of Philosophy, Karnatak College, Dharwar.

Swami Ritajananda is from Vedanta Society, Hollywood.

Sri T. S. Raghavan is from Madras.

Sister Savitri is a German devotee and Linguist.

Brahmachari Sarada Chaitanya is from the Ramakrishna Mission, Burma.

Sri C. Rajagopalachariar is one of the few national leaders who are anxious to uphold the fundamental values of life. We are glad that, in spite of heavy pressure of work at his age, he could give here one of his ideas harmonizing the materialistic and spiritual views.

Sri Mark Sunder Rao's main interest is indigenous expression of Christianity. He is currently general secretary of the National Missionary Society of India. He was associated with the late Mr P. Chenchiah, and with others who believe in the great contribution of India to the spiritual wealth of the world.

INDIAN UNITY AND SANSKRIT

In recent days so many centrifugal forces are at work that leaders of India naturally feel concerned about the unity of India. Various agencies are being geared to this purpose. Sriman Narayan, Member, Planning Commission, recognizes this as 'the greatest problem' and speaks about the efforts made by the Commission. While writing on 'Planning for India's unity', he says :

> 'But the greatest problem that confronts us today is the problem of achieving emotional and cultural unity of our people without which mere

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economic planning will be more or less futile. Our national leadership was eminently successful in bringing about the integration of more than 600 states within the Indian Union soon after the achievement of independence. But the work of reorganising different States on a linguistic basis has created a number of problems which require concerted efforts for their satisfactory solution.'

'The Planning Commission and the Ministry of Education have already started preliminary studies for evolving a comprehensive programme for strengthening the forces of national unity through education and cultural activities during the Third Plan period. Unless we tackle this problem in a planned manner in addition to various developmental activities within the country, it will be very difficult to put through a Plan of Rs. 10,200 crores during the next five years. It must be realised by all of us that planning for national unity and cohesion is as important, if not more, as planning for economic development of the country. Recent language riots in Assam should serve as a danger signal to the country and should be utilised for forging closer cultural and emotional ties between different States of the Indian Union in the larger background of our common national heritage.

(*Free India*, Nov. 27, '60.)

For the development of this 'national unity and cohesion' the importance of Sanskrit has been shown by Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Chairman, West Bengal Legislative Council and formerly Chairman, Sanskrit Commission. For the freshness of approach and persuasiveness of the plea we may notice a few of the passages from his article on 'Indianism and Sanskrit' in *Indo-Asian Culture* (July, 60), which is the text of an address by him delivered at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

'Although the history and the conditions have been partly dissimilar in China and in India, yet we find one great thing: the Unity of China as a single country, culturally and politically, has been maintained primarily through the Chinese System of Writing, as much by the Classical Literature of China, but chiefly by the former; while the cultural, and following that the political Unity of India has been made possible only through the great fact of Sanskrit (leaving aside extraneous binding forces like the rule of the British, or in earlier days, of some dominant section of the people acting like a military Herrenvolk).'

'Just as from the later forms of the Old Indo-Aryan speech or Vedic Sanskrit of 1000 B.C. have descended all the various Middle Indo-Aryan speeches, or Prakrits, of about 500 A.D. and from these Middle Indo-Aryan speeches have issued all the various Modern or New Indo-Aryan Languages, or Bhashas, like Bengali, Oriya, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Kosali, Hindi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Hindki, Sindhi, Himalayan with Gorkhali etc., so also, in the same way, the various Modern Chinese Languages have come out from a single Ancient Chinese of nearly 3000 years ago.'

'There have been suggestions to do away with this peculiar state of things in China, and to introduce a system of writing which would give the actual pronunciation of the word. But no practical attempt could have any meaning in this matter for the whole of China. If such an attempt were sought to be implemented, then the unity of China in the matter of language, which is maintained by the script, will have to be abandoned. The Chinese-speaking areas would at once split up into a number of independent language-areas, where the different spoken languages, with their pronunciations written in a phonetic script, and with their new developments in word-formation and grammar, would cut themselves away from each other; and there will no longer be the bond afforded by the written script, cumbrous though it is.'

'Thus in China, they have virtually reconciled themselves to the position that a few years of heart-rending labour must be the lot of the Chinese boys and girls in acquiring one to two thousand characters of their language as the most obvious, the most potent and practically the indispensable expression and symbol of Chinese Unity in matters both cultural and political.

'What is done by the Chinese Script for China is being done by the Sanskrit language for India. This is the force which we see to a large extent no doubt, but which also moves in a way unseen of many, in maintaining the Unity of India. For this reason, Sanskrit must be retained, even at considerable sacrifice of time and labour; nay, even at all cost, as an essential thing in our Indian life, in our Indian culture, and in our Indian education.'

Dr Chatterjee also cites the efforts of reviving Hebrew in Israel 'just to strengthen the religious, cultural and political basis of their very existence as a nation' and Irish in Eire 'just to preserve the Irish Name and the Irish Nationality as well as the Irish Way of Life'. If Indian unity is our prime concern and if we are ready to spend enough money for it, why should we not spend for Sanskrit and take advantage of its services? For Sanskrit

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has been a potent factor down the ages for fostering cultural unity in India even in days when there was no political unity. But the effort should not be to make Sanskrit isolated. It must be integrated with general education to be a real unifying force having its liberalizing influence upon all the people from their early days.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

YOGA PSYCHOLOGY: By Swami Abhedananda. Pp. 403. Price Rs. 10. Ramakrishna Vedanta Mutt, 19/B, Raja Rajakrishna Street, Calcutta-6.

This is a most fascinating study of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and it grew out of the lectures on the subject, delivered by Swami Abhedananda, to an American audience in 1920. The lectures have been edited with copious reference not only to the text, but to the commentaries of Vyasa and Vachaspati Misra. Thereby a long neglected treasure, such as the Maharishi's work was, has been resuscitated, and a keenly felt need fulfilled.

In Viveka Chudamani, V. 12 & 13, Acharya Sankara points out that sacred baths, charity, and hundreds of pranayams, cannot be a substitute for 'Vichara', through which alone could one obtain the knowledge of the Self. The Bhagavadpada's reference to the Yoga-Sutras, though oblique, is obvious. Indeed, as the eminent author rightly observes (p. viii), Yogins have been classified by him as dualists, along with the Sankhyas. These lectures, however, could be justly claimed to have dispelled altogether any such impression. Because their sum and substance might well be summed up thus, as the author has done at P. 257. 'The true Self' he says, 'can be realised through concentration. Through regular practice, we should study our own mind, and through breathing exercises, we should control all the lower emotions and lower tendencies. Through concentration and meditation, we should remove all the pain-bearing obstructions. Gradually, we shall gain a glimpse of our true self and understand the relationship with the Infinite, realising that we are birthless and deathless. The attainment of this permanent blissful state is the aim of Yoga Psychology'.

Yoga Psychology is not sectarian but affords the fundamental ideas that underly all religions and philosophies' (P. 383).

It maintains that the sense of limitation is removed by the recognition of the limitless Divine Consciousness and raises man above the level of nescience or maya, conferring on him everlasting bliss and freedom. (P. 403).

It must therefore be said to the credit of this publication that the Yoga Aphorisms have been dealt with in such a manner that one finds little difficulty in regarding them as a *sine qua non* for the study of Vedanta, of Advaita Vedanta too. For in truth, 'Atma Vichara' can be facilitated a great deal by adhering to the rigid discipline chalked out by Patanjali, which has been explained and illustrated with the utmost clarity in the pages of this book. Methods have been set out, which enables one to attain a complete balance of mind, and through the medium of a cultivated and balanced mind, to attain supramental Consciousness.

The lectures have been framed on the model which Swami Vivekananda had employed for broadcasting the essentials of Raja, Karma and Jnana Yogas. The sutras have been reduced to an exact science, and treatment is throughout clear and systematic, enlivened with apt illustrations from everyday science and happenings, and with particular reference to the tenets of Christian theology.

Perhaps the highest tribute which one might be permitted to pay to this book and to its illustrious author is that it is now possible to regard Patanjali's Yoga Aphorism, which had quite unjustifiably been, almost a forgotten chapter in the evolution of Indian Philosophy, as embodying no esoteric doctrine or dogma, but an eminently practical scheme of internal discipline which suits the aspirants of all religious and philosophical schools, to attain the highest in spiritual life and endeavour.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

MEN OF GOD: By T. V. Kapali Sastry. Published by M. P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pages 64. Price Rs. 2.

Amidst the chaotic conditions of social order left by the disintegrating influence of Buddhism and counteracted to some extent by Kulinism in Bengal Society during the 15th Century, the cult of Krishnabhakti played a notable part in the history of Bengal Vaishnavism of which Sri Krishna Chaitanya was the outstanding personality, who became the soul of the cult and his

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life itself presented concrete ideals. Not until his pilgrimage to Gaya, had this proudest and haughtiest young scholar of Nadia was pronounced a second Sukadev or Prahlad who had seen the Unseen.

The life of Guru Nanak was full of vigour and enthusiasm and his struggle to spread the Supreme Faith is well told.

Guru Govind Singh, who had to undertake the heroic mission of remedying the cruel acts of the oppressive Muslim rulers had to die-hard in establishing the sovereignty of Truth. The narration about the life and adventures of these three men of God is lucid and clear. The book, however, does not contain their philosophic Thought.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

ECONOMIC & INDUSTRIAL LIFE AND RELATIONS: By M. K. Gandhi. Compiled and edited by Shri V. B. Kher. Vol. I. P. 202. Rs. 3.50. Vol. II. P. 379. Rs. 4.00. Vol. III. P. 269. Rs. 3.00. Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad.

These three volumes bring out the views of Mahatma Gandhi, on industrial and labour relations as well as on the socio-economic problems, which still await solution in our country. As a world teacher, or as accurately styled, a 'Yuga Purusha' his writings, speeches and even conversations have an eternal value, and this is more, so because whatever he said he had practised himself. And going through this veritable encyclopaedia, one is brought face to face with the personality of the great teacher and theorist and of the principles for which he stood. In most respects his views have been refreshingly original and perhaps the best tribute to this collection is that the world today is enabled to know that his doctrines were no copy book maxims but were eminently practical and pragmatic, which had as its sole objective, the happiness and well being of the masses of the country.

His pattern of Swadeshi did not rest on ill-will. A more worldly wise caution was not uttered when he pleaded that 'to reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's own country, of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly!' 'I buy' he says, 'useful literature from everywhere, surgical instruments from England, pens and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland, but not an inch of cotton fabric from England or Japan.' (II.83)

His attitude towards machinery was equally rational. He was not opposed to any contrivance which does not deprive the masses of the opportunity to labour, which helps and adds to his efficiency, and which he can handle at will without being its slave (e.g. the Singer Sewing Machine).

He was naturally drawn towards the Charka as our 'Kamadhenu', whose extinction had brought on 'slavery, pauperism and the disappearance of the our artistic talent, which was the envy of the world'. None can demur to his castigation of the Spinning Mills which are 'frankly money making and will not regulate prices'. (II. 260.)

He had expressed himself against strikes in no unmistakable terms. His conditions for a strike were stringent. 'Strikes,' he says, 'are a crime immediately the employer accepts arbitration'. 'Labour in India, is at the mercy of those who are set up as advisers, and the latter are not scrupulous'. 'All public sympathy must be withheld from unjustifiable strikes'.

Regarding the propertied class, his view is that the 'Congress represents the poor: still that does not mean that the other classes, viz. Zamindars and Capitalists should go under'. 'The Zamindar must not be wiped out. The man who supplies brains, is as much a tiller, as the one who labours with his hand' (III. P. 189.), 'I shall be', he says, 'no party to dispossessing propertied classes of their private property without just cause'. (III. Pp. 201.)

His passion for diet reform was boundless.

His attitude towards Englishmen was typical. 'I do not think' he says, 'I can claim a deeper attachment to anyone than to Mr Andrews. We look forward to a day when out of friendship will grow the same close brotherhood between the Englishmen and the Indians in India.'

Gandhiji was essentially a man of religion and ethics. There is, according to him 'no character where there is no patience, truth, gentleness and humility' (II. 176) 'I believe', he declares, 'in Advaita: if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him'. (II. 86.) He sums up: 'God is the hardest task-master I have known in this Earth; He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow, but on His terms not on your terms'.

S. RAJAGOPALAN.

EAST & WEST SERIES: By Sadhu T. L. Vaswani, No. 52, PILGRIMS OF KNOWLEDGE. Pp. 32. Price 0.50 nP. No. 54. PEBBLES ON THE SEA SHORE. Pp. 32. Price 0.50 nP.

The pilgrims of knowledge spreads out the right type of education and what the students should

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cultivate in order to achieve the right education. Incidentally the author stresses on the value of the three vital truths of silence, guidance from within and sharing with others in the service of love.

The second booklet provides the readers with fine examples of sacrifice, compassion and love. The last three chapters are interesting and instructive in as much as they enable us to understand our own selves in the real perspective.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SHRADHANJALI (Offerings of the heart): By T. L. Vaswani. Pp. 28. Price 50 nP.

THE GITA AND THE MODERN WORLD AND OTHER TALKS: By T. L. Vaswani. Pp. 46. Price 75 nP.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

Birthday Celebrations of The Holy Mother

The 108th Birthday Tithipuja of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was observed in the Math on 10th December, 1960. The day started with Mangalarati in the shrine at 5 a.m., followed by devotional songs and chantings of select portions from Gita, Upanishads etc.

Worship in the shrine was started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 1-30 p.m., after the Homa was performed. About 1,250 devotees and 1,200 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening service in the shrine, selected teachings of the Holy Mother were read and some senior Swamis spoke.

The public function came off on 11th December, the succeeding Sunday. This being a ladies' function, many lady devotees and students of Sarada Vidyalaya, Avvai Home and other institutions assembled at 3-30 p.m. and sang devotional songs in praise of the Mother. The function started with Mrs. S. Ambujammal in the chair. Mrs. A. R. Indira and Mrs. Rajaratnam spoke in Tamil. After the Tamil speech there was music by Mrs. Kanaka Candade. Then after the Bhajan by the students of Queen Mary's College, there were speeches in Hindi, English and Telugu by Mrs. Mandakini Krishnamurthy, Dr. Mrs. Saraswathi Chennakesavan and Kumari Y. Sarojini Devi respectively. The speakers referred to the Holy Mother's unostentatious life of service, self-effacing sacrifice, all absorbing love, ascetic forbearance and immaculate purity and emphasized that humanity in general and women in particular would be immensely benefited by learning to follow in her footsteps.

At the end there was distribution of prizes. The girls winning first prizes in different languages recited their pieces. With the Chair's concluding address and the vote of thanks the function came to a close.

OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce the passing away of Sri P. Manickasamy Mudaliar, B.A., aged 92 at his own residence in Mylapore, in the early morning on Sunday the 4th December 1960.

He retired from the service of the Rangoon Government about three decades ago and was the recipient of a pension to the end of his life. He, at an early age, came under the influence of Srimat Swami Ramakrishnanandaji, the first president of the Ramakrishna Math at Mylapore, Madras. With a sceptical mind full of doubts in the field of religion and an intellect eager for discussion he approached the Swami but soon he succumbed to his pure love and towering intelligence and became his life-long and ardent devotee. He was moving intimately with the members of the Mylapore Math, which he served for many years to the extent of his capacity; and was also associated with the management of Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya at Coimbatore in its initial stages. He was the author of a book in Tamil — Jagat-Jeeva-Para-Vilakka-Vinavidai — based entirely on Swami Ramakrishnananda's 'Man and the Universe'—which did much to popularise the teachings of the Mission. He also translated into Tamil a lecture of Swami Vivekananda. Both the books were published by the Mylapore Math. He was an earnest student of Advaita Vedanta, keen in his practice of meditation and intellectual discussions. He published in Tamil 'Nārada Bhakti Sutras' and several other small booklets also. We offer our sincere condolences to the bereaved members of his family. May his soul rest in peace!

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on January 9, 1961.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII FEBRUARY 1961 No. 10

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

At dusk Keshab came with his party. He bowed low before the Master, touching the ground with his forehead. The Master returned the salutation in the same manner. Shortly afterwards, in a state of partial consciousness, Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Look! He has brought the whole Calcutta crowd. I am supposed to deliver a lecture. I won't do anything of that sort. Do it yourself if you like. Lecturing is none of my business.'

Still in an ecstatic mood, he said with a divine smile: 'I shall eat, drink, and be merry. I shall play and sleep. But I cannot give lectures.'

Coming back from samadhi Sri Ramakrishna said to Keshab: 'Keshab, once I went to your temple. Many people were there. The ladies were seated behind the screen. In the course of your preaching I heard you say, "Oh God, please bless us, that we may dive and disappear altogether in the river of Bhakti." At once I looked up to the screen and thought, "If you disappear altogether in the river of Bhakti, then what will become of those behind the screen?" By all means dive into the river. But you had better come back to dry land now and then. Don't disappear in the river altogether!' (Keshab and the others burst out laughing.)

'You see, Keshab, you are householders. How can you reach the Ocean of Satchidananda all at once? You are like a mongoose with a brick tied to its tail. When something frightens it, it runs up the wall and sits in a niche. But how can it stay there any length of time? The brick pulls it down and it falls to the floor with a thud. You may practise a little meditation, but the weight of wife and children will pull you down. You may dive into the river of Bhakti, but you must come up again. You will alternately dive and come up. How can you dive and disappear once for all?

'Is renunciation possible except in the fullness of time? The time for renunciation comes, when one reaches the limit of enjoyment.'

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THE YOUTH AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

Every movement has a special liking for the youth. The reason for the fascination is, in the prime of life all the sensibilities and capabilities are in the best condition and if they accept an idea or work at this period of life, they can render the best service. The whole-souled effort, the complete abandon, the total lack of personal considerations are some of the characteristics of youths at their best. Even the average among them have better equipments, specially health and enthusiasm. Moreover, full integration of the mind with a particular idea or a pattern of life or a vocation becomes easy if the contact begins early. Efficiency also develops through a long association. It is because of this that even in an ordinary job men are taken in their younger days. It is true in the case of religious life also. General religious, even honest, life is possible if training in spiritual values is given early in life. And for special proficiency there is no doubt that efforts in earlier life facilitate things. When the problem is to bring the mind under control, it is essential that efforts begin early. Of course, it is not that there are no instances of advanced souls who began their spiritual training late in life. But normally early days are the best time possible for spiritual preparation. Though experience and judgement generally develop late in life, in spiritual realization no time is fixed, for much depends on the samskaras as well as early effort. Hence we find most of the religious teachers of mankind had their highest realization quite early in life. Many of them finished their mission very early too. Thus Dhruva and Prahlada were child prodigies. Sankara, Christ and Vivekananda passed away before 40. Chaitanya and Ramakrishna had their realization before 30. And Buddha, Ramanuja and others, though they lived long, had their realization earlier. That is why it is accepted in the religious tradition that advanced age is not necessary for religious experience. As religious experience presupposes long preparation, the scriptural injunction is : *yuvā eva dharmashilah syāt* — even in youth one should be religious.

But sometimes doubt is expressed whether it is necessary for the youth to know of spiritual heritage or whether it is proper that the youth should practise spiritual disciplines ? The implied idea is, spirituality or religion is the requirement of the old age. When man has no more hope, no more capacity to follow the desires, when he hears the footsteps of death, then only is the time for him to turn religious, to think of the other life, to think of God, to pray to Him for the forgiveness of sins.

It is a fact that at the fag end of life the questionings become predominant. As Charles Lamb says in one of his delightful essays that no man before thirty thinks he is mortal. It is when he has the experience of illness or some turn of fortune or loss of a dear person that he becomes aware of death and wonders whether there is a life after death. Most of them again soon forget everything or try to do so and go the old ways. Only a few become serious about these questions and try to solve them.

This idea may lend support to the notion that religion originates in fear, as is contended by some. There is a lot of discussion about this whether this fear arose in the primitive man by witnessing the wonders of nature. But the

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earthquake, the tidal wave or the storm might have aroused only a purely natural fear as it does even now. But man all the time had a natural consciousness of the existence of God, which we call samskara. It is because of this he has called God as his Self, Lord, Master, Father, Mother and the like, which are all very affectionate and intimate relationships. Hence it is more probable that the idea of God was associated more with rejoicing than with fear. It is because of this we see so many festivals connected with religious life. The Upanishads too say that it is from Ananda that everything originates.

One question may be, if religious ideas are instinctive and the effect of samskara, is training of these necessary? It is true that samskara is supreme but in many of us it is not so predominant. By education and practice, the latent samskaras come to the surface and the weaker ones become strong. Moreover, even if we do not use the ideas immediately, if we know them, we can discover the true state of things when experience comes. Experience plus knowledge is the proper means of bringing out the best in man.

Even if some people take to religion through suffering, it cannot be ignored that many people feel the urge for spirituality quite early in life. This we attribute to the spiritual evolution, the result of the impressions of past lives. The practice of spiritual discipline is the way of satisfying an organic hunger in them for the Beyond. Regarding them there can be no question whether they should know about or lead the spiritual life.

But what about the others? It can easily be answered by saying that knowledge itself is the best reason of study. Secondly, if any training is to be given, it must be given from younger days. Otherwise, why should the military, the industry, and even the offices prefer to recruit younger people? Moreover, if religion is necessary for society, the religious values must be inculcated and there must be a systematic method. Again, the study of religion is not merely like studying any particular academic subject. Religion is vitally connected with life. In fact, they are so intermingled that they cannot be really separated. A life well lived must be based on spirituality. So every person should know of and practise the higher values, and that too from earlier days. Then why is it, some people look askance at spiritual training? One reason may be, the external forms of religion do not appeal to them. To them religion has become a bundle of rituals, the motive or inner meaning of which is not known. So there is naturally a tendency of separating spirituality from religion. Shri Vinoba Bhave recently spoke about it, saying that the days of religions have gone and the days of spirituality have come. This idea has appealed to Pandit Nehru so much that he has drawn our attention to it more than once. There can, of course, be no objection to this, for all the great leaders of religions, the saints and prophets, have drawn the attention of man to the core of religion rather than to the shell. But it is the law of nature that the shell is as much necessary as the kernel. And hence the rituals too have developed in every religious system. Spirituality without religion is only an idea. However, it may be possible for some evolved people to be completely free from all rituals and yet retain the idea. But for the vast majority of men both are definitely necessary.

Religion has three aspects, philosophy, mythology and ritual. All the three together create in our mind a sense of the holy, which all alone one item may not be able to generate. It is precisely because of this that even political ideas

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are also transmitted through festivals, music, art etc. So to inculcate the spiritual values, the time-honoured rituals and festivals should surely be practised. This makes the ideas easily assimilable. For children that is the only method. For the youth too this will be beneficial.

To the question whether religious ideas should be given to the young people, we definitely say 'yes'. When from his childhood onwards, a boy can be made aware of other values of life through books and studies and often not so good ideas through cinema and the like, then why should religion alone be left out? We understand the objection of anti-religious people, for they generally do not believe in the dignity of the individual and consider him only of a lesser variety which could, when necessary, be controlled and moulded as the rulers liked. For people not believing in total control but at the same time feeling the necessity of higher social virtues, there is no other go but to provide some sort of training for this.

For individual benefit too Dharma or spirituality is enjoined in early life. The purpose, says the Mahabharata, is that the joys of youth should not spoil the peace of old age, the nectar of early days should not turn into poison of later days. This is definitely a lesson to learn. How often we see that in youthful blindness and inexperience we do things which spoil our future life or at least torment our conscience later.

As for actual practice, can ideas be really separated from life? Ideas work in the mind. If an idea strongly impresses a mind it is bound to change the behaviour of the man. And that is what is called religious life. If people with higher virtues are to be in society they will have to be from younger days alone. Ideas cannot take deep roots in later age. Moreover, unless young people get the ideas, who will help in maintaining the social order or in bringing changes in it? For these require youthful energy and freshness of vision, and if these values are not necessary for young people, on what grounds should it be said that they are necessary for older people? 'Tell me what are the prevailing sentiments', said Burke, 'that occupy the minds of your young men, and I will tell you what is to be the character of the next generation.'

One mistake we often commit. We take the essential self-negating virtues in man for granted. We forget that these virtues to be accepted as social norms or at least as social ideals required the constant preaching of religion which down the centuries was speaking about the urgency of these qualities. If this stress is withheld and there is no training, after some generations we shall find, as Rajaji has several times pointed out, that the society has no ideal to judge its standards. The laws of the jungle or probably worse, will prevail in society destroying its cohesion and unity.

So for study of religious principles and heritage, there can be no objection, especially when we know that religion will help the youth in leading their social life in harmony and individual life in peace and blessedness.

Moreover, what is the heritage of a nation, other than the spiritual heritage? This is more true of India. We cannot know a man unless we know about his background, his faith, his culture and the like. No man can claim to have complete education, who does not know about his heritage. The knowledge of past achievements helps a youth to be energetic, hopeful and confident. Why should we lose this valuable asset in sheer prejudice and ignorance?

Then there is the question of specialization. In every branch of knowledge

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specialists are necessary. They can be produced only if they begin the learning quite early in life. Moreover, when thousands of people study a subject, only a few become specialists. In the field of spiritual knowledge too, the same is applicable. To produce a few souls like Christ and Buddha, Rama and Krishna, Sankara and Ramakrishna, if it is necessary to have a special training for all we must have it. As Swami Vivekananda said, if image worship could produce in thousand years a God-man like Ramakrishna, it has a claim on the society.

So it is clear that religious knowledge and training must be given to everyone, and that too in the early age, for knowledge is its own reward, for spiritual knowledge helps man to lead a better life, for in times of doubts this will help young men and women to find a direction. The spiritual disciplines will give a certain measure of control over themselves, which is coveted by everyone. Moreover, the youth are given too much of physical and intellectual disciplines; an equal amount of spiritual discipline is urgent to make education balanced and complete. And for seriously religious youth it is an organic necessity; it will prepare him for future leadership and some of them will realize God, which is the *summum bonum* of life.

LAMENT NOT

NANUBHAI DAVE

Lament not,
For the Path you tread
Was meant to be such —
Thorny, desolate and dark.
You have but to proceed.

Linger not,
For those who cling to you
Or harken you to deviate,
All have to look ahead
From the tower of their frames
To search for the Footprints
Of mighty Souls of Yore
Imprinted for Eternity.

Laugh mercilessly
When misery befalls you
And shake off its touch
Like the speck of Dust
On your garment white.

Believe and ever note,
That your vessel of life
Is to be filled to the brim
Not with sorrows, sighs,
But with glorious deeds,
Done from day to day,
To Glorify God's Creation
And heal human Woes.

Then arise
And walk fearlessly
That if you ever look behind
Will only be done,
To urge you onwards, onwards,
Till Body lost,
Self melted in oblivion
And very ashes to pronounce
In flavour and force,
The Soul's silent march
Ever in infinity.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

T. R. RAJAGOPALAN

For anybody seeking a window to catch a glimpse of the working of Divine Hand, the study of the life of Sri Ramakrishna is sufficient to get a view of His working from close quarters. The period chosen for his incarnation, the place, the parentage, the time of his birth, his cancer trouble during his last days, which attracted a band of selfless youths and fired them to renounce their all and dedicate themselves for carrying out his mission to every nook and corner of the globe, will surely serve as proof of His plan and will convince us that all the happenings taking place in the universe are not stray and meaningless incidents but well-coordinated and planned ones to suit His working. The period of his incarnation was well timed to undo the wrongs accrued on account of the influences brought about by the English trading community at that time and the challenge thrown at us about our traditional religious beliefs. About the place, it was Bengal which was affected most by Western influences as Calcutta played a prominent part those days. The simplicity, piety and devotion of the parents of Sri Ramakrishna are now known to every one. The time of his birth viz., high planetary positions at the hour of coming out of his mother's womb is also unparalleled.

Deeply studying the trends of the working of Divinity through all the above happenings, one is irresistibly apt to come to a conclusion that we are all mere instruments in His hands to carry out His plans and should therefore completely surrender to Him eradicating our ego.

Just as the process of producing electrical energy is a long one and hidden to our sight and only we see it in the shape of light in electric bulbs, we see in Sri Ramakrishna a high wattage of Divine light after a long process of His working hidden apparently to sight of commoners. Just as Sri Krishna has given *Bhagavad Gita* to humanity through the instrumentality of Arjuna, the Adya Sakti, the Primal Energy, has made Sri Ramakrishna a visible symbol for man's renunciation, devotion and perfection, which have all reached their zenith in him. Through him, She has made known to all of us the various 'Sadhanas' to be practised to reach the Goal of Self-Realisation.

Just as a class teacher works out various sums on the black-board and shows to the students, the Adya Sakti had used Her pet son as a black-board and revealed to the world at large how a man can reach perfection by making him (Sri Ramakrishna) instrumental to undergo various 'Sadhanas' and show them to the world.

Having lost all consciousness of the little 'I' and merging it with the Indwelling Atman, he had no will or desires of his own and whatever acts done by him and utterances made, they were nothing but that of the Primal Energy whose embodiment he was. To prove this, the physical beauty and charm of his person at one time was so much dazzling that people going to him were very much attracted and it was a sort of annoyance to him. He had to request the Mother Kali to do away with such charms and make him ordinary-looking which was readily granted.

The high plane of consciousness in which he was observed on occasions having totally forgotten his body and surroundings, is something which cannot even be conceived by ordinary people. Out of his unbounded mercy alone, he had to come down again and again to normal consciousness to elevate the suffering humanity with his nectar-like words and sweet parables full of Upanishadic wisdom.

The emergence of such a holy person whose very remembrance is capable of bestowing divine bliss on us all can be only possible by incalculable 'Tapas' by countless people for several centuries in any country. Fifty years (the period he lived with us) before Eternity is nothing and yet he has left us spiritual wisdom enough to last for Eternity.

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FROM GADADHAR TO RAMAKRISHNA

HUGUETTE HERBERT

He is eighteen when he disembarks at Calcutta. He has come from his native village Kamarpukur not far from Puri.

What could one make of him? They thought of teaching him to read and write. But he showed himself to be such a bad pupil that his teachers had to give it up. His mother tried to engage him in the fields or at home. But he chose to disappear for days together, leaving everyone in ignorance of what he was doing. Now, times are hard; his father is dead, leaving just enough to provide for the basic needs of the family. His elder brother Ramkumar, on whose shoulders has fallen the responsibility of the whole house, has had him brought to Calcutta where he is conducting a small Sanskrit school; being assisted in his work, he hopes to be able to watch over him and force him to earn his bread.

But the young Gadadhar proves himself as indolent there as at Kamarpukur. One day, when his brother, at the end of his patience, reprimands him sharply, he replies in a tone which admits of no rejoinder, 'All these studies bore me. They fetch me nothing and teach me even less about the Divine!' He begins to be looked upon as one of those parasites which are a torment to their families. At the moment when Ramkumar is most anxious about his young brother's future, an opportunity presents itself for both of them to be the officiating priests at a temple just built by a rich widow, Rani Rasmani, at Dakshineshwar. Ramkumar, whose affairs are going from bad to worse, becomes the principal pujari and soon he initiates Gadadhar into this office. What a relief for the family!

* * *

In our days, Dakshineshwar forms a suburb of Calcutta, for six kilometers is nothing, even if one has to negotiate all the barriers of the streets and lanes such as are found in no other town in the world.

In 1857 it is quite different; for it is a veritable expedition that one undertakes, most often in a horse carriage, hired preferably with many other passengers so that the journey may cost less. One can also go there by boat over the Ganges, but as this journey means in every way a long day of travel, one prefers to cover the distance on foot, which a peasant will always consider as the shortest mode of going from one place to another. And for the little village of Dakshineshwar, constituted for the most part of mud houses whitewashed with lime and covered with thatch, scattered here and there with that lack of vitality characteristic of many places, to be endowed with a temple which surpasses in size and importance the one at Kalighat, Calcutta, is to climb on the social ladder and to accede to the category of 'towns'.

Only a ghat, constructed in proportion to a river which is burdened after purifying Bharat Mata during so long a passage, joins the temple to the mass of water which flows at its feet like thick lava, licking at its passage rocks and terrains to carry a last taste before plunging into the ocean. The entire panoply of little cupolas could have admired itself in these glaucous waters, if the great white temple had not been installed behind the steep bank of the river, in the middle of a garden resplendent with flowers, with its two lakes and its grove of the five sacred trees, the Panchavati. Besides the principal sanctuary dedicated to Ma Kali, the temple consists of a shrine to Radha-Krishna, twelve cell-temples, each one containing a big lingam of black marble for Shiva, a vast hall for gatherings where bhajans and kirtans will take place, two others smaller, for the *kathas*, rooms storing the provisions for the temple, of ample outhouses for the family of the donor and the families of the officiating priests.

Such is the 'castle', the city within a city,

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which in its turn, will create for itself another village, of which Ramkumar at first, but for a very short time, then his brother, will take possession as the officiating priest.

Very soon, however, the behaviour of Gadadhar causes anxiety to those around him. When, very early in the morning, the other Brahmins of the temple go down to the ghat for their ablutions, they find the young man seated under the banyan. His eyes are puffed with weeping and want of sleep; his eyes are glassy, he cannot succeed in closing them even by digging his fingers into them. They gaze upon the waves, leaves, stones as also the faces of those who look at him. They try to drag him away, but he resists, beats the earth with closed fists as if it was the fault of the earth, rolls his head on the ground. His hair, his eyes, his mouth get covered with earth sticky with his tears, and in the middle of sobs, he utters strange words: 'But what have I done to Thee, Mother? Am I one stricken with plague, an outcaste, that Thou sendest me emissaries? Canst Thou not take the trouble of coming Thyself to console Thy child?' To whom does he speak? The people make a circle around him and try to reason with him, but as his tears redouble, he is frightening to look at, and, although a Brahmin, his shabby and slovenly appearance repels even the best-intentioned, they end by going away abandoning him to himself.

That brings to him a semblance of relief. In a surge of the little strength left in him, he gets up and goes towards the ghat and descends the steps with the shaking legs of one who has spent long hours squatting.

In the hollow of his hand he gathers a little water of the sacred river, dabs at his eyes, rinses his mouth, and plunges three times, as if he were obeying a hereditary impulse, as if all the caste in him were driving him to this gesture of ritual. Already, dripping, with his tangled hair which he does not for a moment think of brushing, and the thin cotton dhoti clingling to his skeleton body, he climbs the stairs. He is seen then to penetrate into the temple gardens with a little basket hanging upon his arms, and pluck the hibiscus of a flambuoyant red, — flowers *par excellence* of Kali.

Hriday, his young nephew, who assists him in his puja, looks at all this from a distance and does not dare to approach him, for he seems to be engaged in an animated conversation with some one facing him. From time to time, he stops, lifts supplicating eyes, goes into a disquieting burst of laughter which ends in a sob, then with his hibiscus, his *juba* flowers, he returns to settle himself at the foot of the banyan. Slowly, carefully, lovingly, sweeping with the back of his hand the few particles of dust found deposited on their petals, he strings one by one those bleeding tongues, the devouring flames that men call flowers. When he has finished, he throws back his head, and eyes half-closed, contemplates his garland as if in a daze, as if it was Ma that he thus held in his hands.

He gets up at last, gathers the accessories he needs for the puja, and crossing the courtyard, arrives before the sanctuary.

His hand rests on the door and then drops. He darts great frightened glances right and left, he is afraid to open the door, yes, afraid. Afraid to find himself face to face with Her again, afraid that one more day may pass without his seeing Her living, for far too much has he contemplated Her in Her statue, afraid of finding Her impassive, yet another time, before the anguish which consumes him. But She is there, as on all other days, erect and black in the penumbra. Her hair undulates under the breeze which would have blown off once for all, the garland of human skulls round her neck, her skirt of gold made of human arms which hung from her waist: all that completes the silhoutte of a dancer. Her upper left hand holds a golden hatchet, the lower left hand a freshly cut head, while with her lower right hand she holds out alms to her worshippers, and with her upper right hand she sketches a gesture of protection. . . . She smiles and menaces, frightens and soothes, whirls, disturbing, unseizable, all a flame tawny and black!

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He has placed at Her feet his implements of puja. But there — at the moment he takes out of the basket the garland of flowers and goes towards Her to put it around Her neck, a new fit takes hold of him! His tears flow, he sees Her dancing before his dulled eyes, laughing, jubilating. . . . But he would not, and he cannot, continue any longer, his head whirls, his tears flood his dhoti still wet with Ganges water, he sinks onto the marble floor. No, this is not what he seeks, not this bewildering haze, it is not this semi-consciousness which will satisfy him. He refuses to be the plaything of his own imagination. He wants to see Her, to be fully conscious of Her presence, he wants to see Her face without his tears coming to cloud his sight or create the illusion of a presence. . . . What he wants really is to see Her in flesh and blood, even if it is necessary for that to exchange his own body, his own flesh, his very bones. . . . His eyes fall on the sword in the shrine. That is it. Since She refuses to come to him, since She makes sport of him, treats him as an imbecile, he will immolate himself at Her altar, like one of those goats that are sacrificed at the time of the great puja.

He rushes forward . . . his hand grazes the sword. . . . His hand? No. It is not his. It is a black hand, a hand with long, slim fingers, loaded with thousand-fired rings, a hand of a woman, the Mother's hand, which arrests him. He looks at the hand, his eyes follow it up the arm, round and firm, then travel to the shoulder, to the neck encircled with a garland of skulls and, at last, to the tender, caressing eyes which warm him with their velvety glance. The arms close round him, real arms with flesh perfumed with camphor and rose, arms which cradle him like a tiny baby. . . .

Hriday has been a witness to a scene of which he understands nothing, if not that Gadadhar is definitely mad. He walks away stepping backwards up to the courtyard and there, he turns abruptly and hurries to the quarters of the pujaris. Seeing him come, a relative knits his brows and already guesses what the young boy is going to tell him. 'Again?' Hriday opens his mouth. Hriday wants to speak. But there, — tears start flowing down his cheeks too, suddenly. 'But speak! What has happened?' Hriday turns his eyes towards the sanctuary and drags him by his dhoti.

Gadadhar it was who had fallen like dead on the flagstones. . . . It is Ramakrishna who has risen and is now singing and dancing, yes, dancing before Ma. He smiles at Her, claps the cymbals, beats the rhythm on a copper tray which he has seized for a drum; his head thrown back, he sings softly a melody of assuaged complaint. The thread of the garland, which he had prepared for Her, is broken, but he offers Her the flowers from it, one by one, not — ah! sacrilege! — without first touching with them all the parts of his own body, even his feet. Now his steps lead him to farthest corners of the little room, and now he comes near Her, whirls round, and in an ecstasy, caresses Her chin and cheek with the gesture of a child, happy at having found his Mamma again.

He does not see Hriday who is looking at him with eyes dilated with fear; he does not hear his voice which calls him. He only hears Her laughter, the tinkling of Her anklet bells — like Krishna's flute for the Gopis, they will never leave him any more.

* * *

Twenty years later. The Master is seated in the middle of his little room, at the corner of the temple courtyard. His eyelids are always swollen, and his hair is cut short, his head is always thrown back, his mouth always partly open showing rather long, irregular teeth. He is sunk, rather than seated, under the thick white shawl which covers his shoulders. His crossed legs are so thin that one wonders how they can carry the weight of his body. Held on his knees, his long hands, open, fingers set apart, are at rest waiting to be used, to support him by scanning, animating his words.

All that touches him near or far is of an immaculate white: dhoti, shawl, sheets, the

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linen, cushions. Three or four persons are busy, they put garlands round his neck, mark his forehead with red paste, light the incense, gather the baskets of flowers, fruits and the dainties that the visitors place at his feet unendingly.

The crowd is divided: on one side, the massive silhoutte of men, their shoulders heavy with dark shawls, legs amply covered in front and practically exposed behind. On the other side, the frail silhoutte of women whose white saris bordered with red, give the impression that only one ribbon is rolled round them. It is clear that the majority are the Bengalees.

The Master is treated like a temple in the heart of a town. The people close up to leave around him as much vacant space as possible. Outside the immediate circle, the humans pay the price for being nothing but humans, and huddle together, stamping and crushing each other, overflowing the little room and the corridor into the courtyard. Those who are at the farther end will not be able to see him, will hear nothing of what he says, but the very fact of being near him is sufficient for them.

To break the constraint at finding themselves in front of this unusual being — of whom one does not know whether he is present or absent, human or Divine, man or woman, old man or child, — to spark up the animation which will transport the audience into a delirious joy, they begin to put him questions. But he answers in monosyllables; he is visibly tired at always having to do with people who are like 'milk diluted with five times the water'. Suddenly, however, a human flame sparkles, a question shakes, wakes him, lights him up: 'What is the path that leads straight to the Divine, Gurudev?' '*All* paths lead to God.' Then, very low, as if he were afraid even to hear it himself, 'But the quickest way of all — it is still the way of madness . . .'

* * *

A hundred years later. In the corner of the cloister, the room is paved with marble, three niches have been carved in the walls. In the middle of the room a large bed, another small by the side, then an altar with flowers and copper vessels complete the impression of tiers. Everywhere, on the beds as well as the little altar and the niches, there are photographs: that of Ramakrishna on the large bed, of both Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi on the altar, of Vivekananda, Brahmananda and again Sarada in the niches, till one asks oneself how one could render worship to the departed when photography did not exist.

The little room is empty, silent, bare. Through the bars of the window, one can see the coming and going of some rare visitors to the temple. They traverse the courtyard, of which the stones are heated by the sun, to go to the shrine of Ma. One hears the tinkling of a little bell, the puja has already begun.

It reminds one of a beach deserted after the bathing season is over: the sea is there, the waves and the sand, too, but it is no more the season, because the sun is not there any more — and the little room now resembles a museum of memories, with its bad photographs that one surrounds with flowers every day, as he used to prepare his garland of 'juba' for Kali.

* * *

Outside the temple, above the Ghat, *his* banyan is fenced with a grill. There are also the vendors of sweets, flowers, of children's toys; in the middle of the cows, elephants and monkeys made of plaster, there is *his* photo, shining and of many colours; he has rosy cheeks, red lips, bright eyes, but all the retouching of photographers has not succeeded in putting the smile of a man of the world on this mouth of the peasant mystic.

When a drop has fallen into the water, it is never the drop itself that we see, but the successive circles around it which go on getting larger and larger till they dissolve completely. It is better therefore to lift up our eyes and try to follow a new Drop in its Descent.

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THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI GANANANDA

The glorious writings of the Bhagavata have come down to us, not as history, nor as eulogy of certain kings and heroes, nor even as poetry, though we find exquisite poetry therein, but as the stories of the lives and works of the Lord and His devotees in human form. The purpose of the writing was that people might gain knowledge of and devotion to the Lord, and develop dispassion towards worldly life. The stories are not supposed to be taken as literally true. It is the common experience of one and all who have reverently read the book that they find the celestial song of Sukadeva at once sweet, ennobling and elevating. But equally real, transporting and exhilirating are the words of the modern Sukadeva, 'M' who has recorded the direct words of the greatest of incarnations, the fullest manifestation of the Lord in the modern age, Sri Ramakrishna. The stories and personalities of the great sages and incarnations of yore have come down to us after a good deal of chiselling and polishing. Commonsense tells us, and it is also admitted by the writer of the Bhagavata himself, that the stories need not be taken as literally true, for they are written with the sole purpose of imparting knowledge and devotion to the hearts of men — 'विज्ञानवैराग्यविवृद्धये नृणाम्' (Bhagavata, 12.3.14). If there is an incarnation whose life is authentic, whose words and teachings have been noted down with almost stenographic accuracy and which come to us with the vigour of freshness, it is Sri Ramakrishna.

Embodiment of the Vedas

Sri Ramakrishna is the living embodiment of Vedic culture; his life was the practical illustration of Vedanta and the public demonstration of all aspects of the spiritual knowledge of the human race. In the fullest sense of the term, his life and teachings were the fruits of the *Nigama-kalpataruh,* the wish-fulfilling tree of the Vedas. He lived within the short span of fifty years, the entire religious life of humanity in general, and of the Hindus down the ages, in particular. He represents Veda, Vedanta, Tantra, Purana, and all sacred literature. The essence of all religions is expressed and exemplified in his life and gospel.

Vedic religion was re-established by Sri Ramakrishna. He is the Purnavatara and *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* or *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* is the freshest and sweetest fruit of the Kalpataru that is the Veda.

The spiritual growth of humanity as well as the philosophical advancement had been recorded and more or less explained in the Vedas. The huge body of religious literature developed after the Vedas is either repetition, paraphrase or reorientation of the Vedic teachings. Krishna is real because he was the Veda-purusha. The Gita is authoritative, because it is the essence of the Vedanta. The rishis of yore who had formulated the code of conduct and values of life, merely repeated what was in the Vedas. The celestial song of Sukadeva is nothing but the Vedic teachings illustrated in the lives of Sri Krishna and other heroes. Even Sri Krishna in Gita did not say anything original. He said: स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः That is the case with Sri Ramakrishna's teachings also. Neither Vyasa, nor Sankara, nor Ramanuja claimed any originality. Swami Vivekananda too did not. 'M' merely recorded in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* what he had directly heard from Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda

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and his brother monks spoke what they had directly heard from Sri Ramakrishna. They were scrupulously truthful and they wished to avoid all exaggerations. Therefore, the *Kathamrita* of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna is the real fruit of the Vedas, and the sweetest of all. His life and teachings are so simple, and at the same time so vast and profound, that it would take the whole lifetime of even the best of men to comprehend. Swami Vivekananda said :

> The spiritual ideal that was Sri Ramakrishna was so great that if I or any of his disciples spend hundreds of lives we could not do justice to a millionth part of what he really was.

Profundity of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

Swami Vivekananda was a lion among men. His penetrating mind with his great spiritual attainment was exceptionally capable of grasping the essence of what Sri Ramakrishna said. But even he could not fully comprehend him, and felt diffident of talking about him. Yet, we too try to understand him with our measuring rod, and we too try to realize the goal of life through his teachings.

Message of Kathamrita

The one outstanding idea which remains alive in our minds after reading the *Kathamrita* or the *Lilaprasanga* is that God is more real than the realities of the world, and that God-realization is possible in this very life for a genuine aspirant. God is near us and accessible to us if we wish to have him. The goal of human life and the means of realization as taught by Sri Ramakrishna, may be summed up thus in the words of the Gita :

'अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ।'
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥

'Having been born in this impermanent world which is full of miseries man's primary duty is to realize the Lord. By pure devotion one certainly realizes Him.' But when people become worldly minded, and immersed in its fleeting pleasures, they become incapable of comprehending the higher values and come to regard the world as permanent and full of happiness. But those who are capable of discrimination find it otherwise. Unless one is capable of realizing Him who is the indwelling spirit, there can be no peace or real happiness. In this unreal world, He alone is the Real ; He is the spirit working in and through matter. He is the One who manifests Himself as the many. He is to be found out first within, and then without. Every chapter, every page and paragraph of the *Kathamrita* bespeaks of this impassioned urge to every seeker after truth.

How to reach the goal

The goal can be reached by various paths. There are different methods of attaining the *summum bonum* of life. All the different forms of spiritual practices may be brought under four divisions. As early as the Gita, these broad divisions have been enunciated :

ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति केचिदात्मानमात्मना ।
अन्ये सांख्येन योगेन कर्मयोगेन चापरे ॥
अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।

Dhyana, jnana, karma and upasana are given as constituting the well-defined paths of realization. From time immemorial, the individual souls have trodden along these paths to the supreme Soul. But all cannot follow all the paths with equal advantage to themselves. For the majority of men, the path of Bhakti is more natural and easier. That is the path for this age, and Sri Ramakrishna has shown us how to tread along this path. The other paths require some special fitness, the most difficult of them being the path of knowledge. Similarly the yoga marga may not suit all. Karma marga is very dry unless soaked in Bhakti. But the path of Bhakti can be followed by all ; even by the renouncers and by those who are not free from worldly attachment. The author of the *Narayaniya* says :

त्वत्प्रेमात्मकभक्तिरेव सततं स्वादीयसी श्रेयसी ।

From the beginning to the end Bhakti is sweet. It does not demand any time or space, any accessary, or even a partner. Merely by

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repeating His name with love, one will attain to Him. Even a mechanical repetition of His name will ultimately enable the devotee to reach Him. A devotee can go a long way without even a guru. At the right time, a competent teacher will come in search of a struggling soul, and take him across the Samsara. This fact has been proved in the case of many a seeker after truth. Did not Narada go in search of Dhruva? Did not the seven rishis go in search of Valmiki? Did not the great Sankaracharya go in quest of Hastamalaka and evoke him from the great silence? In the case of Sri Ramakrishna too, almost all of his teachers came to him, and taught him the different paths of yoga. One may therefore follow the path of devotion without any fear. The God whom we are trying to find out in temples and churches and holy places is always within us. This human body is the city of Brahman. We have to search Him in His palace — the human heart. In the core of one's heart is to be found the secret of all secrets, and not anywhere else. It is within. That is to be enquired first and known. Thus it is said in the Upanishads:

अथ यदिदमस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म दहरोऽस्मिन्नन्तराकाशस्तस्मिन्यदन्तस्तदन्वेष्टव्यं तद्वाव विजिज्ञासितव्यम् ।

(Chandogya U., 8. 1. 1.)

Any one of the innumerable names of God, would serve as a mantra for japa and meditation. Any word or syllable in any fashion is enough to call Him. The Pranava is considered as the highest word of God. The word 'Kali' which stands for all the alphabets constitutes a great mantra. Sri Ramakrishna, by worshipping Kali, showed his wonderful power. So one may choose the name and form of his Ishta and practice Japa and meditation. When meditation becomes perfect, Japa stops itself. External worship becomes impossible then.[1] The essential thing is that one should dive deep within one's consciousness.

Final stage in spiritual experience

It is obvious that this spiritual experience cannot be expressed in words, for words are inadequate. Moreover the mind does not function there, in as much as ideation is always at a lower plane. When the certitude of the supreme is attained, the mind ceases to function. It is only by realizing Him that all the doubts of the mind are resolved. All the knots of the heart will then be cut asunder, and infinite bliss will be the constant possession of the devotee. By realizing Him within, we will be able to see Him without — to see Him in everything, men, animals, plants, grass, and even in inert matter.[2] One will then be able to say:

यच्च किञ्चिज्जगत्सर्वं दृश्यते श्रूयतेपि वा ।
अन्तर्बहिश्च तत्सर्वं व्याप्य नारायणः स्थितः ॥

To such a great soul, whatever is seen is the image of God — His reflection; whatever is heard is the song of God, and whatever is done becomes literally His worship; and to him, whatever is, is He alone. Until one is able to reach this blessed state, all the work and worship that one practises should be regarded as means of realization. When the end is attained, work is worship.

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[1] *Work and ritualistic worship are impossible when intense love of God dawns*: 'After a man has attained Samadhi all his actions drop away. All devotional activities such as worship, Japa and the like as well as worldly duties cease to exist for such a person . . . he cannot even sing the name and glories of God. (Gospel, p. 75.)

[2] *God in everything*: Chaitanya, consciousness is awakened after Advaita Jnana — the knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. Then one perceives that God alone exists in all beings as Consciousness. After this realization comes Ananda, Bliss. (p. 196.)

The Jnani sees that God alone exists. The Vijnani sees that it is God who has become all this. After attaining Mahabhava and Prema one realizes that nothing exists but God. (p. 362.)

One sees nothing but God everywhere when one loves Him with great intensity. It is like a person with jaundice who sees everything yellow. Then one feels 'I am verily He'. (p. 39.)

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Steps to realization

The natural tendency of man is to work. Work implies egoism and attachment. Men are generally attached to the senses, and to the sense world. They must start with work as a spiritual practice. It is said that सक्तानां कर्मयोग: (Narayaniya) — people with attachment for sense objects and who wish to enjoy the fruits of their action, should start with Karma yoga. Karma is the action performed under natural propensities; Karma yoga is doing karma as a means of salvation by dedicating the fruits of action to God. Karma yoga thus becomes the natural starting point for the majority of men. But there are a few at least who are neither too much attached to the world, nor sufficiently detached but who are devoted to the personal aspect of God. To them Bhakti yoga is prescribed, as it is stated:

ये तु नात्यन्तसक्ता नाप्यत्यन्तविरक्ता त्वयि च धृतरसा भक्तियोगो ह्यमीषाम् ।

(Narayaniya)

Bhakti is both means and end. In the highest state of Bhakti action drops off. Bhakti brings Jnana and emancipation. Bhakti easily becomes one with the supreme.

We have here a few of the unequivocal statements of the Gita on this point:

"मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम्" "भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशय:" "ततो मां तत्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरं" "मद्भक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मद्भावायोपपद्यते ।"

This is the chief note of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teaching. The central part of the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna is that while Karma is *bahiranga* or secondary, Bhakti and Sanyasa are *antaranga* or primary, and constitutes the essential part of the Sadhana.[3] Sri Ramakrishna told his lay disciples to hold on to God with one hand, and with the other to perform their worldly duties.[4] But he whispered into the ears of his chosen disciples, to give up everything for the sake of God, and lead the life of absolute devotion and renunciation. Like the ancient rishis, he asked his select few:

किं प्रजया करिष्यामो येषां नोऽयमात्मायं लोक: ।

The mission of Sri Ramakrishna was to experience and establish religion in its essential form — to show that the path of love is the royal path. He exhorted people day and night to dive deep[5] into the consciousness of God and be immortal.

Place of philanthrophy in spiritual life

Yet we find a different note in the message of Swami Vivekananda, the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, who was an out and out advaitin, but an advocate of Karma yoga, for the emancipation of the individual as well as of society. He had a dynamic philosophy for the nation. He wished that the East and the West should meet on the same platform. The question is generally asked as to whether Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda represented two different ideals, and preached diversely. Our answer is an emphatic 'No'. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda were not two different personalities; they were one in their realization and preaching. They constitute the obverse and the reverse of the

[3] *Work and Devotion*: 'Therefore I say, at the beginning of religious life a man makes much ado about work but as his mind dives deeper into God he becomes less active. Last of all comes the renunciation of work followed by Samadhi. (p. 76.)

[4] *Renunciation and Work*: One should renounce 'woman and gold' mentally at first. Then by the will of God one can renounce it both mentally and outwardly. It is impossible to ask the people of Calcutta to renounce all for the sake of God. One has to tell them to renounce mentally. (p. 103.)

When love of God is awakened work drops away of itself. If God makes some men work let them work. . . ' Renounce all and say, 'O mind may you and I alone behold the Mother letting no one else intrude'. (p. 240.)

[5] *Dive deep*: Dive deep in the sweetness of God's bliss. What need have we of His infinite creation and unlimited glory.

If you dive deep in the uttermost depths
There you will find the gem of love.

One attains God when one feels yearning for Him. An intense restlessness is needed. Through it the whole mind goes to God. (pp. 76, 77.)

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same coin. It is impossible to understand the one without the other. The one without the other will not lead to light. But if we accept both we shall overcome death — that is, evils of the heart, by means of the one and attain immortality by means of the other.

The mighty mind of Swami Vivekananda conceived of an international organization for the good of the entire humanity. The organization is for those who have renounced the world, as well as for those who have not yet. Sri Ramakrishna used to test and select his disciples, but Swamiji brought all types of people to him though some of them seemed outwardly unworthy of his grace, so vast and universal was the mind of Vivekananda. He had only one mission in life. It was to bring as many people as possible to the path of righteousness, and to gather them in the name of his master. His ultimate object was that humanity must become of the Ramakrishna type. To be of the Ramakrishna type means to love God alone, who is dearer than sons, riches, the body, this world or the other. Swamiji's call for work is really the call for worship, to do work as worship. If the work done in the spirit of service to God will help one spiritually, much more helpful and propitious it is to do His worship in the normal sense of the term. So the ultimate aim of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna is, *to see, to be,* the truth. It is to enable man to be God. The clarion call of Swamiji woke up people from their slumber. They have been charmed by the melody of his flute — and thereby offer their devotion at the lotus feet of Sri Ramakrishna. If the mind is given completely to the Lord, it is impossible to think of anything else. In order to enable the aspirant to take up at the appropriate time the highest form of spiritual sadhana, viz. that of unconditional devotion, Swamiji introduced Karma yoga. Schools, colleges, hospitals and other charitable institutions have been started at the instance of Swamiji with this ultimate object in view. If we should forget it, it would be like forgetting to see the owner while admiring the beauty of the garden, or counting the leaves and branches without enjoying the fruits.[6] That would be a tragedy. One must be watchful and determined on this point. It should be always remembered that "यो वा एतदक्षरं गार्ग्यविदित्वास्माल्लोकात् प्रैति स कृपण:" (Br. U., 3. 8. 10) — pitiable is he who leaves this world without realizing Him. The last message of Sri Krishna in the Gita is "मच्चित्त: सततं भव" 'Be immersed in me'. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'Dive deep, dive deep in the ocean of Sachchidananda'. Whatever may be the import of Swamiji's message for humanity at large, and in particular to the patriot, the politician, and the philanthropist, his message to the individual aspirant is that in the first instance he should resort to work and worship. Next he should regard work as worship, and ultimately take to worship alone. Worship alone, means to be in God-consciousness, to remain in Brahmanishtha.

Doing good to the world

After attaining this blessed state, if one is spared to live in this world, to such a one work is really worship and nothing else. It cannot be called work. According to Sri Sankaracharya, it is called akarma. The activities of great teachers, and of the incarnations, should be regarded as akarma. In them there is no urge or desire for work. They are sometimes goaded as it were by the divine will to act in a particular way, most fitted for the time and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Swamiji explained the nature of his work as follows :—Before the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the power which was in him, the power which was worshipped by Sri Ramakrishna as Kali entered in the body of Swami Vivekananda, goading him to do this or that. It did not give him rest until he established the order of Dharma, until he re-

[6] *See the gardener*: But people look at the garden only. How few seek out the owner. (p. 311.)

Our only duty is to see the Master of the garden and speak to him. The only purpose of life is to realize God. (p. 197.)

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captured the almost lost glory of Sanatana Dharma. He thus showed the path of salvation to the individual, to the nation, and to the world. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are one, and their message is one. They together constitute a rare manifestation of the Spirit. When the one asks us to see the kingdom of God within, the other asks us not to remain there, but to bring down the kingdom of God on earth. This ascending and descending together make the music more wonderful and enchanting. So, the duty of one who dives deep into the life and gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is to see first the kingdom of God within, and what happens afterwards is not his concern now.

NATURE, MAN AND GOD

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

Man's environment — the general subject of this program — as it is usually understood consists of the objects, regions, and circumstances which surround him : his fellow men, the animals, birds and insects, the trees and plants, the stars and planets, and also earth, water, fire, air, and space — what we speak of as nature. But there is another element which permeates all these tangible phenomena. It is called spirit or God in the major religions of the world. God is the invisible support and essence of all that exists. I have therefore chosen as the specific title for my talk 'Nature, man, and God.'

Hindu thinkers, from the earliest period of their recorded history, have taught of the eternal oneness of existence, which holds in its embrace all that has come to be. This oneness, they maintain, pervades the universe and yet remains unaffected by it. In it are included the higher beings or angels, men, sub-human creatures, and nature. The whole of reality may be compared to a pyramid. Its base, which is solid, represents the physical universe. As one climbs up the pyramid one finds that its substance is becoming rarefied. This part may be called the universe of the mind. At the apex, which is the most rarefied of all, is the pure spirit or Godhead. Reality seen through the senses is matter, and seen through the mind is idea. The same reality comprehended through a man's inner spirit is the Godhead. All objects, tangible or intangible, form the seamless garment of the Creator, who is conceived in Hinduism as being in His true nature absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss.

What is the creation? It is a projection of God. Without external materials, God, through His inexplicable potency, evolves the universe out of Himself. Why does He create? The finite mind of man can never fathom the mystery of how the One becomes the many. From the standpoint of the relative world it may be said that one part of the spirit, the 'inferior' part, becomes the physical bodies of all creatures in the world, and another part, the 'superior,' animates them with life and consciousness. God is likened, in the Hindu scriptures, to a spider, which spins its web from its own silk, moves upon it, and finally withdraws it to itself. Created objects have also been compared to the sparks of a blazing fire, or the waves of the ocean — all of the same nature and stuff as their origin.

Hinduism gives a spiritual interpretation of nature, as opposed to the mechanistic and materialistic one. Nature is not a self-evolving, self-preserving, and self-destroying category. The Godhead or pure spirit is involved in the whole process. We read in the Vedas, the Hindu scriptures : 'The heavens are His head; the sun and moon, His eyes; the quarters of space, His ears; the revealed scriptures, His

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speech; the universe, His heart. From His feet is produced the earth. He is, indeed, the inner self of all beings. From Him come all the oceans and the mountains; from Him flow rivers of every kind; from Him have come, as well, all plants and all flavors.' The writers of the Vedas regarded nature with intense feeling. They were fascinated by the wonders of the dawn and the sunrise. To them nature was a living presence revealing the majesty of God. They heard the voice of God in the thunder, saw His hand in the storm and in the stilling of the waves. For them different aspects of the spirit shone through different natural objects. These aspects are called, in Hinduism, the deities or gods. The sky god manifests the infinitude of the spirit. The stars and planets change, storms rage and clouds roll away, but the limitless sky abides forever. The beneficent and bounteous earth, too, is deified. And Varuna, the god of the sky, became the god of morality — watching over the world, punishing evil-doers, forgiving the sins of the penitent. Likewise there were the sun god, the moon god, the fire god, the god of death, and so on. This way of looking at nature is not, however, polytheism. The Vedas say: 'Reality is one: sages call it by different names.'

God speaks to us, the Vedic seers thought, through nature. Here is a story from the Vedas. Once the gods, men, and the demons —the three kinds of offspring of the Creator— sought instruction from Him. To all three He repeated the syllable 'Da.' Now there are three Sanskrit words — meaning respectively self-control, charity, and compassion — which begin with this syllable 'Da.' The Creator taught the gods to practice self-control, men charity, and the demons compassion. These three types of creatures represent the three types of people in human society. The 'gods' in this context refer to those people in human society who are refined, ethical, kindly, and affluent and who, in spite of their many virtues, often are lacking in self-control. Oftentimes they indulge in gambling or drinking or luxurious eating. They were taught by the Creator to exercise self-control. Those called 'men' are the ordinary run of people — greedy, competitive, and acquisitive. They were asked to exercise charity. There are also in society persons who may be called 'demons' — those who are cruel and violent by nature. They were taught to practice compassion. Even today, says the Vedic story, the Creator gives the same instructions to the three classes of human beings through the reverberating thunderclap, which makes the sound 'Da-da-da.' Nature, according to Hinduism is an expression of God. He pervades nature as fragrance pervades a flower, or as the lustre pervades a gem or as wetness pervades water.

What is man? What is his immortal essence? The tangible man is a psycho-physical entity possessed of limbs, sense-organs, and mind. What is his true self? Is he a mere body? Or is he a body with a soul? Or again, is he a soul with a body? According to certain modern scientists, man is a physical and chemical complex which obeys the laws of physics and chemistry. The same chemical elements are found in man as are found in air, water, earth, or stone. A man absorbs foreign substances into his body and changes them into his own substance. If a man consists purely of material elements, then how can we account for his esthetic sensibility, his moral commitments, his spiritual aspiration? And if death ends human existence, then why does a man long for immortality and freedom? According to other scientists, man is one of the million species of animals. Like them, he eats, develops, reproduces, and moves about. Common to man and the animals are such characteristics as ability to learn from experience, growth toward maturity, and reproduction for the preservation of the species. Now if a man is merely one of the animals, which are guided by instinct, he can have no moral responsibility, not to speak of spiritual yearning. Sociologists, again, study man in relation to other human beings. Certain social and cultural characteristics — such as articulate speech, oral and written language, various achievements in the fields of religion, art, science, and

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technology, power of invention, and use of symbols — set man apart from both physical objects and the animals. Others have explained man in terms of the libido or of economic forces. None of these interpretations of man can be called false : they are simply inadequate, because they leave out of consideration man's essential nature. They are rather like the directions given on a motorist's road map, which provides him with much useful information about the roads but does not tell him anything about the color of the landscape.

According to the Hindu view, the real man is neither the body, nor the senses, nor the mind. He is spirit, dwelling in the body. The soul assumes a body at birth and discards it at death. Why the spirit identifies itself with the body cannot be understood by our limited minds. The embodied man is confronted with other embodied creatures and feels an attachment for some, an aversion for others, and indifference toward the rest. He becomes a victim of birth and death and is conscious of pain and pleasure, good and evil. But like everything else, worldly pleasure is impermanent. A man can never be satisfied with it, for he is in essence immortal spirit. He seeks abiding bliss. Real bliss, the Hindu scriptures teach, is in the infinite. There is no bliss in the finite. Attachment to the physical world directs a man's desire outward and downward. Disillusioned about material pleasures, he turns his mind inward and upward. Thus he begins his 'return journey' from the world of matter to the world of spirit. He cannot stop till he fully manifests his innate divinity and perfection. To that end he practices moral and spiritual disciplines, which in the Hindu scriptures are called yoga. These disciplines consist mainly of (1) discrimination between what is real and abiding and what is unreal and impermanent, (2) non-attachment to the unreal, (3) control of body and mind, and (4) contemplation. At long last he becomes perfect as God is perfect.

The attainment of perfection is not possible in a single lifetime. Hinduism has therefore formulated the doctrine of rebirth. As a man discards a garment which is old or worn out, or which no longer fits him, and puts on a new garment, so the soul discards its present body and assumes a new one. The soul remains unchanged while passing through the changes of childhood, youth, maturity, and old age. It likewise remains unchanged by death. The soul's rebirth is controlled by the law of karma, which is the low of cause and effect. This law is an incentive to man to lead a virtuous life so that he may gradually eliminate the suffering caused by his own unrighteousness. The perfect man dedicates himself to unselfish service of others — the free soul helps others to become free.

Perfection is attained when a man discovers his intimate and inalienable relationship with God. It is a relationship which may be conceived either as between two different entities, or as between a part and the whole, or as a complete identity. The Hindu scriptures speak of a God who dwells in heaven. We also learn from them that all creatures are eternal portions of the Godhead. Finally, the Vedas state : 'Thou art That' and 'I am He.' Hinduism accepts all three relationships as valid : they represent three different stages of spiritual evolution.

To sum up what I have said about man's true nature. In essence, man, like the Godhead, is birthless and deathless spirit, without a beginning or an end. He is forever free, all wise, all bliss. The difference between one man and another is not one of kind. It is a difference in degree of manifestation of the spirit. In the wicked the spirit is less manifest than in the virtuous. The gulf between the sinner, the saint, and the Godhead is bridged by personal evolution. All men, according to Hinduism, will eventually realize their Godlike nature.

What is God ? God is, in essence, spirit. What is the nature of spirit ? It is nameless, formless, non-dual, attributeless intelligence, which can neither be perceived by the senses nor be comprehended by the mind. In reality, nothing besides it exists — neither the perceiver nor the world he perceives. It is the Knower

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of knowing and can never become an object of knowledge. It is unknowable. We learn from the Vedas : 'You cannot see That which is the Witness of vision ; you cannot hear That which is the Hearer of hearing ; you cannot think of That which is the Thinker of thought ; you cannot know That which is the Knower of knowledge.' 'It is never seen but is the Witness ; It is never heard but is the Hearer ; It is never thought of, but is the Thinker ; It is never known, but is the Knower.' This non-dual, undivided spirit is the basis of the oneness of existence, comprising the Personal God, man, and nature.

Let us briefly consider two other aspects of the Supreme Spirit. It has already been said that the creation is a projection of the Godhead. When associated with the creation, the Supreme Spirit is called the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe. In this aspect It is generally designated as God, who is said to pervade the universe. The Vedas state : 'The whole universe is filled by God, to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom there is nothing greater or smaller ; who stands alone, established in His glory. He grasps without hands, moves without feet, sees without eyes, hears without ears. He knows what is to be known, but no one knows Him. His hands and feet are everywhere ; His eyes, heads, and faces are everywhere. His ears are everywhere ; He exists encompassing all.' This aspect of the spirit is called the World Soul.

In another aspect, God is the inner self and the controller of all beings. We read in the Vedas : 'Thou art woman ; Thou art man ; Thou art youth and maiden too. Thou as an old man totterest along on a staff ; it is Thou alone who, when born, assumest diverse forms.' Again, 'Thou art the dark-blue bee ; Thou art the green parrot with red eyes ; Thou art the thundercloud, the seasons, and the seas.' In answer to a question from a disciple regarding the self, his teacher says : 'He who inhabits the earth, yet is within the earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body the earth is, and who controls the earth from within — He is your Self, the inner controller, the Immortal.' And he makes the same statement about water, fire, the sky, air, the moon and stars, the sense-organs, and the mind.

As we have seen, there are three stages in a man's spiritual evolution. During the first stage, called the dualistic stage, he regards God, the soul, and nature as separate from one another. He worships God as Father or Mother, as Master, or as Comrade or Beloved, and thinks of Him as dwelling in heaven. During the second stage, called the qualified non-dualistic stage, he sees reality as a oneness which, however, admits of a distinction between God, the different souls, and nature. God includes the souls and nature. Nature is His body, the souls are its living cells, and God Himself is the soul of all souls. Or God may be likened to a pomegranate fruit, which cannot be thought of as something apart from the rind, that is to say, nature, and the individual seeds, that is to say, souls. This God is an intra-cosmic God. During the second stage one sees unity in diversity. This is the highest spiritual experience a man can have so long as he remains conscious of his soul and the world. In the West it is often — though inaccurately — called pantheism.

But Hinduism goes one step farther. During the final stage of spiritual evolution a man enjoys an experience in which there remains no distinction whatsoever between God, the soul, and the universe. What is here experienced is undifferentiated consciousness. There exists for the experiencer neither body nor mind nor ego. Reason cannot explain this state. He knows it through direct and immediate experience in deepest contemplation. When absorbed in it, he is conscious neither of himself nor of the world. But returning from that exalted level, he sees unity in diversity. God, souls, and nature, though appearing distinct from one another, are found to be permeated by the non-dual spirit. Keeping in his mind an awareness of this non-duality, he can still be active in the world. He can face the hard realities of life in the light of his non-dual experience. He can even, like a snake, hiss when

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threatened by evil, but he can never bite. No evil can be done by him. His state is like that of a man suffering from toothache while going about his daily business : a part of his mind is always on the pain. Or, to give a cheerful example, it is like the state of a man with his whole mind absorbed in the thought of his beloved, who nevertheless eats, drinks, and performs his daily duties. Non-dualism is the highest flight of Hindu philosophy and Hindu religion.

The oneness of existence is not a mere speculation or religious dogma, but a reality of actual experience. Poets and artists get a glimpse of this oneness. Highly sensitive mystics experience it in their inner consciouness. Ernest Hemingway has written that as he was surveying a battlefield, he saw the same soul being killed over and over again, and at last realized that that soul was himself. Saint Francis of Assisi discovered his spiritual affinity with all and addressed the sun, the moon, the stars, wind, fire, water, and earth as his brothers, sisters, and mother. A contemporary mystic of India, Ramakrishna, who was born in 1836 and died in 1886, had an intense experience of this oneness. He lived most of his life by the Ganges river. One day two boatmen began to fight outside his room. All at once it was found that marks of their blows appeared on his back. On another occasion a man was walking over the tender grass of a near-by lawn and those present in Ramakrishna's room saw bruises on his own chest. Toward the end of his life Ramakrishna suffered from cancer of the throat. He found it extremely painful to swallow even liquid food. At the request of one of his disciples, he prayed to God to cure his ailment so that he could take some nourishment. At once God revealed to him that he was eating through millions of mouths.

The lesson we learn from these experiences is that we cannot hate others without hating ourselves, we cannot hurt others without hurting ourselves, we cannot destroy others without destroying ourselves. If you drop a pin on the floor of your room, the repercussion will be felt even on a distant star. This is not mere poetry, but a fact experienced by sensitive souls. The interdependence of all creatures and the solidarity of mankind are fundamental truths based upon the oneness of existence.

The malady of the world today is a spiritual malady. Economic, moral, and political confusion are but its outer symptoms. The tragedy of the human situation is that we are living in a loveless, ruthless, competitive world. Friction and hostility are everywhere. Man is not at peace with himself, with his fellow human beings, with nature, or with his Creator. Under the impact of the secular outlook we have repudiated God, who is the very source and essence of our being. We compete with our fellow men for illusive profits. We exploit the world of matter in order to create weapons of destruction. We befoul the air with poisonous fumes. We contaminate the streams with the waste products of our factories. We are believers in the doctrine of the survival of the fittest and accept competition as the means to progress. Fear, suspicion, secretiveness, and the spirit of violence and exploitation are poisoning the very springs of human life and welfare. We cannot rid ourselves of fear and ill-feeling as long as we separate ourselves from any other being — whether it be an animal, or a man, or even God. The happiness derived from exploiting others is impermanent, elusive, and in the end boring. It has no spiritual value. Real and abiding happiness, which opens the gateway to inner peace, is derived from co-operation with all beings. God, the fulfiller of all desires, should be propitiated through devotion, worship, and meditation. Through His help we shall reach our spiritual goal. Nature treated with kindness will bestow upon us fruits, grain, herbs, and vegetables in proper season. Animals treated with compassion will minister to our pleasures and our needs. Human relationships, if guided by love and unselfishness, can create an ideal society in which all will have an opportunity to develop their potential divinity. Competition, with its slogan of 'either - or' breeds hatred and

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hostility. Co-operation encourages friendly co-existence.

It can be easily understood that not all men can realize or even understand the concept of the oneness of existence. For the idea of separateness is deeply rooted in the average mind. But wise leaders of society can realize the meaning of this concept for the modern age, with all its potentialities for either mass annihilation or universal well-being. Let our ministers of religion, our teachers, our statesmen, and our labor and business leaders, teach and apply the ideal of human solidarity in their several fields. The wider the application of this ideal, the greater the possibility of banishing fear and suspicion from society and of creating a climate of peace and happiness for all.

In conclusion let me repeat a prayer from the Vedas :

> 'That refulgent one who is in fire and water, who is immanent in the whole universe, who is in the herbs and the forests — to that God I bow again and again.'

THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF FORMS

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

'The tale is not mine ; I had it from my mother, that heavens and earth were once one form and when they had been sundered from one another, they gave birth to all forms and brought them up into light'—These are the words of Euripides, the Greek thinker. The same thought we find expressed in another way in the Upanishads : 'the ultimate reality, Brahman, was in the beginning one without a second. Then It wished to be many and divided Itself into names and forms out of Its own free-will, to fulfil Its own purpose.' A form exists, it makes its impact on our consciousness, it gives happiness. These three 'rights', right to exist, shine, etc., . . . the form gets from Brahman, from its three aspects, existence, knowledge, felicity.

It is important to remember that the Upanishads put name first and form next in the process of evolution. According to Indian thought it is not as though we create something and then give it a name. The intuition of what is going to be created as form resides in the heart of its creator as names as a virbation, as a 'thought' that has half decided on its future expression as form, as the puissance that is going to breathe life into the form and make it live. The words of the Bible in the Evangile of St. John : 'The word was made flesh' brings out almost the same idea.

> 'The word was with God ; the word was God ; the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.' (St. John, 1. 1 & 14.)

It is the creative power of the word that is indicated in these words of the Bible.

So then the spiritual power of the form is in the name, which before creation of a form, rests in the subtle form of a vibration in the mind of the one who creates. And the spiritual power of the name rests in the word. The word is the inaudible sound, the primaeval vibration, the state of Reality before manifestation. This vibration is the word, the word that entered into men and gods and whose surplus went over to trees and plants. This vibration is identified with the sacred syllable OM in Indian thought, OM which existed before all language began, and which is the source of all knowledge.

According to the Indian theory of creation the world is created from sound, not from audible sound, but from inaudible sound, the Vibration. It is known in Sanskrit as Vac or Word. When in the secondless Ultimate Reality is born the desire to manifest itself, there is first a vibration, at which stage the Reality sees in

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itself the universe in its subtle form. Then this vibration takes shape, becomes a nucleus and that is the birth of the cosmic will, the will that will later on multiply itself into thousand individual wills. After the birth of the cosmic will, the world entered into men and gods and the surplus went over to the trees and plants.

It is the word that is the source of man's being and the fountain from which springs every moment his thought and deed. The Hindu books relating to the branch known as Tantra explain that there are four well-marked stages in the manifestation of the Word that rests at the base of our being, physiologically speaking, at the base of the vertebral column.

The first stage is known as ultimate or Para, when the Word becomes conscious of itself and the manifestation of the universe at the same time. Second stage is known as 'seeing' or 'pasyanti' when the Word still subtle sees itself, in the sense that it conceives a form for itself. Both word and form are still in their subtle form. It is this stage that is of great importance to our present study for it is here that the name is born. We are not conscious of this stage but conscious of it in the reverse direction. Suppose there is something before us and we want to give it a name. We contemplate the object, we interiorise it and bring it to this stage where our thought or certitude of the object and its form become identique. From this moment of juxtaposition between thought and form springs the name, for at this moment, our contemplative mind is most creative. It is pregnant with the 'faces', or first 'faces' of things and these faces become names.

The third stage in the manifestation of the Word is called 'middle' or 'middle manifestation,' '*Madhyama*'. And the fourth is the spoken speech — *Vaikhari* — referring to the differentiated objects of the world. The Word that is at the source of cosmic manifestation and the word at the source of man's being are one and the same. For in essence the macrocosm and the microcosm are one. It is this word that breaks forth every moment as creation, that is an eternal fountain of names and forms in this world and it is the same word that breaks forth as thought, word and deed in man. The word has no rest; it is in eternal dynamism. When we wake up in the morning we feel the world is new and has begun with our waking. Was the word which is in eternal dynamism sleeping in us? Yes, it went into a self-chosen dissolution — a sort of spiritual rest or contemplation and with us it is awake and active and the world began the moment we were awake. It was the word that brought the world into being anew. In sleep the word was as it were asleep, it created names and forms not perceptible to us and in waking it creates names and forms perceptible. Both are creation. And when creation impinges on our consciousness we say the world begins. It is the primordial word in man that throws out the world every instant and for an eternal phenomenon, today or tomorrow mean the same.

So then the word in man brings the world of names and forms into being. Man gives a name and a form to God even, to God who is nameless and formless. As a Sufi mystic says, 'Was it not I who gave Thee a name and summoned Thee to long service, was it not I who made Thee busy with my name? Thy calling Allah was my "Here am I"'.

We quoted the words of Euripides according to whom the sundering of heaven and earth was the moment when forms came into being. According to Indian thought the Word at the base of man's being is the source of all names and forms. Whether as Nature's child or as his own instrument, man as the first creator of forms and also the improver of forms, is pushing forward a scheme of perfection for which he alone is judge and critic. What is man worth if he is deprived of this position as creator and critic of his own perfection that he sees spread out in the world? Perhaps he is inseparable from this position as creator; it is an inalienable position or right.

Kant was hinting at it in another way when he said: 'For me there are only two wonders in this world; the starry heavens above and the moral law within'. Evidently he was not

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speaking of a morally moral law in man, but a supremely moral law that is the touchstone of all perfection.

In living up to the moral law, God's gift, man continues to be in God's image, in Divine resemblance. But man steps down from this high estate when he imitates the starry heavens by creating a Planetorium. He steps down from the mood of admiration and awe when he begins to create a replica of the starry heavens. When we admire something we *become* that; in trying to make a replica we destroy the possibility to become. If man had the capacity to make another moral law, he would only try to create it and not to become that. Through admiration and nostalgia for something he cannot manufacture, he is trying to become, to recreate spiritually in himself the moral law, through juxtaposition, integration and identity. To become an ideal we place ourselves in spiritual sympathy by its side and we integrate with it. We can never do this if we break the ideal into parts.

To create we must break our original admiration into parts and reconstruct a new whole according to our lights and so the first contact and admiration is lost. To create we have to wrench an object or concept from its original context where it formed a unity and see it in a new context. Destruction and creation are essential parts of a creative process. Creation is creation of a new form in which the admiration of the original is, in a sense, lost. A creative scientist or genius presses together two planes of consciousness; on the one hand a sceptic and even iconoclastic mood regarding all existing axioms and dogmas; on the other hand, an open-mindedness to the extreme to all new experiences that may fall upon him by chance. Out of this combination results that crucial capacity of reconstructing a familiar object in a new form. For, after all, he gives a new form to something already existing. In doing so he destroys, or compromises with the original admiration he had. Rationality that breaks the original intuition into bits and intuition that reconstructs, both are involved in all creations, scientific, artistic and religious. It depends on us what aspect we give importance, we lay emphasis.

If, for example, we view the planetorium as an advance, we view science as uniquely rational, which it is not. Rationality and intuition make up the warp and woof of science. It will be childish to say that planetorium is an improvement on the starry sky. But if we say that for creating the planetorium, the scientist had to step back and be-integrated with the sky, in other words, to create something new, one has to be integrated with the original form in its purity, then we view the science as an attempt to take a step back in order to advance better. In this view the original admiration of the sky is preserved, at the same time permitting creation as an emanation of that high mood and not as an improvement on it. Nothing new has been created; only forms of the old have been made. Forms as containers of the original intuition have power. The world is a mirror that reflects the mind of the creative Reality, in all stages of evolution of the creative impulse, from the first movement as vibration to the last stage as concrete forms.

Man wants the certitude that he creates anew and science is the result; it gives him the certitude of novelty. Man wants also to preserve his attitude of pure admiration of things and of his innermost essence. Religion answers that need. But in pursuing these certitudes often we are inclined to overdo and put our emphasis most on the 'search' aspect and less and less on the 'being' aspect. We thus lose contact with our inner reality, with our being. Something that awakens this contact with our interior, first by giving pleasure and then with being, is Art by its beauty of form. The world seems to be already tired of religion; may be it will soon get tired of science. Then there is all the chance that it may turn to art which turns our vision to our interior by a treatment of beauty.

We live in a world of forms, beautiful as well as ugly. What is beautiful for me is not always beautiful for another. As Shakespeare

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puts it, 'the lover sees Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt'. If we ask a lover whose sweet-heart looks ugly to us, why he has so much love for that ugly woman when he could have got a beautiful partner, he would reply, 'my friend, please put on my eyes and look at her and you will see how charming she is'. There is great truth in these words. We must attune ourselves to his intuition which bestows beauty on his beloved. Beauty will cease to be what it is, will lose all its charm, if there is a universally accepted standard. Beauty is the joy of breaking all standards. Like a magician pulling out a million things from a hat, man pulls out of the perfection implanted in his heart million forms of beauty and these forms ignite intuition again and so on it goes. Forms of music, forms of thought, forms of painting, are in eternal process of movement, process of renewalling. No artist is satisfied with what he has created. Every artist would have torn away ten or twenty of his first attempts before he came to the final form he gave to the world. This eternal pull the forms feel towards something never fixed, but always in the process of becoming, we may call nostalgia or life. Forms have life and that is why they respond to a call and renew themselves and move. I call this neither nostalgia nor life, but by a more comprehensive term — 'Beauty'. Beauty is the feeling of expansion to newly conceived limits. It is an eternal becoming. Beauty *is* the flow of forms towards an ever shifting ideal, the Formless.

I remember my meeting with a German painter who is one of the well-known painters for abstract paintings and who is also a deep student of Vedanta. When I asked him to initiate me into the appreciation of abstract painting, without explaining anything, he began to bring into the room one after the other his big canvasses of painting. He was not uttering one word. After showing 15 canvasses, when the 16th came, I said: 'Here you are picturing "tiredness", is it not?' He said: 'Now you begin to understand my language, my forms, now you begin to understand my intuition.'

So then, to put ourselves in understanding sympathy of a form, we must be more or less integrated with the intuition behind the form. And then form awakens intuition. From form to intuition and then again to form is the eternal life of form. In other words, form is the interval between two intuitions.

The question does not arise that forms must be perfect in order to awaken intuition. All forms are perfect. A form is not perfect or is ugly when we are not united with it, when we resist it mentally, when we have not transferred our being to it, in other words, when we do not 'love' it. In Vedanta the commonest act of perception implies the restoration of a lost identity between the perceiver and the perceived, where the perceiver transfers his being to the perceived and the duality between the subject and object is thus totally abolished. Every perception is an open door to this identity; but we resist this identity by our preconceived notions of things and so we see in objects and men, ugliness and imperfection. There is a will and intelligence at the heart of every form even as there is beauty at the heart of every object. There is being at the heart of every form. To have contact with the being at the heart of forms we must first be awakened to our being. And there are not two beings but only one. The valleys and rivers do not impress us ordinarily. They are vague and amorphous things to us, without a soul, and without a form. But then to the mystics they have not only a soul and a form perfect, but personality and being.

> My Beloved is like the mountain
> Like the lonely valley rich with foliage
> Like the islands in meditation
> Like the rivers in their tumult and in their run
> Like the murmur of the southern breeze that whisper love.

This is St. John of the Cross.

The gardener does not see any soul or personality in rivulets, and he will be surprised to hear the words of the mystic who finds life and love in amorphous forms as running brooks and lonely islands. The poets have the same instinct for forms. The saint and

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the mystic have the certitude in himself of the being of God, of existence, knowledge and felicity which are the three aspects of the Being of the Lord. As the mystic is well established in the certitude of the Lord's Being, he gets easily in contact with the being of forms outside.

At this stage it is easy to understand the Vedantic teaching that all forms have being—Sat—or better still, all forms *are* being. To exist is to be existence. A form exists, it impinges itself on our mind, it gives felicity. Existence, knowledge, felicity are the three natures of Brahman, the ultimate reality and all forms depend for their reality of existence on these three Natures. Brahman is at the heart of forms and so forms exist, they shine and they radiate happiness. These three natures are not separate, they are co-extensive and co-exist in one. The natures reveal themselves according to our manner of integration. Something pleases us and then we begin by felicity and go deep to existence which is the domain of Art. Or something strikes us by its power to live and then we go from existence to felicity.

By saying that existence, luminosity and felicity are in one the three natures of a form, we mean that a form has depth. At the first contact with a form we have an over-all impression and as we deepen our understanding of it, then newer and newer aspects of it reveal themselves. We may establish an emotional relationship with a form, sometimes even that of religious devotion or total love. Is not this deepening of the understanding of the form, more correctly a deepening of our inner nature? For the more we go deep into the object, the more we deepen our own emotion and love with which we cover the form and begin to love it and adore it or integrate with it. The deeper we go into a form, the more we see a will at its heart. We become united with the form and in this identity, our will is discovered and reinforced.

We know that when we are on the level of intuition spiritual, we take stock of a situation or of a form by the first look. We often say, 'for me, my first impression is the last impression', referring thereby to this capacity of taking in a form in all aspects by the first look. With spiritually advanced people, as also with creative artists, it is so. Their intuition does not work by stages, but in a flash. A poet who sees an elephant in a passing cloud does not construct the elephant by stages, but in a flash. He has to achieve destruction of the cloud and construction of the elephant in an instant. The destruction and creation first happens inside the artist and no creation can happen if there is no 'depth'. The artist or man in the street creates because in him lies the three layers of consciousness, existence, knowledge, felicity by virtue of which he sees in all forms the three layers.

In deep meditation we touch the deepest layer of our being and awaken felicity to englobe all other layers. In deep meditation all language and thought is reduced to seed-form. No doubt, sacred formulae, symbols and forms are used in meditation to begin with. But these serve only to create a nucleus, a 'presence', which crystallises as a spiritual certitude where there is only felicity and no forms. As meditation deepens, the Divine symbol, may be Christ or Buddha, name and form become one and then as one it sinks into the subconscious. In the subconscious level it remains in seed-form. At this stage we feel the joy of meditation centering round the subtle form. Even this 'support' vanishes when it passes from the subconscious to the Pure-conscious plane. In pure consciousness the world of manifestation rests in seedless form. And so the seedful meditation in passing into the seedless becomes a simple felicity feeling, not knowing from where it comes and to where it is directed.

So then in the sub-conscious level things or forms rest in seed-form. Objects and their name (or perception of the objects) remain united in the sub-conscious. It is so in the case of the baby, who does not talk, who does not express its perception in words and names. In other words, the world of forms is not yet formed for the baby. Between a pencil and

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a piece of chocolate, the baby has no distinction. Both it takes to the mouth, and bites. We say it cannot differentiate between forms which is the same as saying that it has not yet lifted objects above the level of intuition. So in a baby, the world of forms rests in seed-form, before bifurcating into values. It is at that stage that a true education for forming the world with new-value and light can be imparted. In India great emphasis is laid on the spiritual education of a baby by giving it an atmosphere and not teaching by words. It is even deeper. Indian tradition maintains that the child is educated best and a new world of values created in him when he is in the mother's womb. When the child has *formed* its values and its world, whatever education we give touches only the surface and does not help to change its values or form a new world.

In intuition the chocolate and pencil remain the same, as objects. When they are lifted above the plane of intuition they bifurcate into their respective perceptions. It is the perception of a form that becomes its name. The name 'chocolate' is the result of its perception. The form and name remained united, without differentiation below the line of conscious level. The moment it is taken out, it bifurcates. The question who gives it a name does not arise. Where was all the names and forms in sleep? Did they not bifurcate into names and forms in dream? But dream forms and dream names have no universally accepted character and so comes the waking. The waking forms and names have a more or less universally common character. The names in waking are given by the waking and those in dream given by dream-state.

We have said all this to show the self-contained power of a form to bifurcate itself in form and perception (name) the moment it is lifted above intuition level. The baby is all intuition and brings both the pencil and chocolate to its mouth. No doubt when it tastes they will taste different. But the fact that they will taste different, establishes our point that the more and more a form enters into the sensorial plane it bifurcates whereas in intuition which is the life of a child, it remains undivided into form, name or perception.

Let me conclude by explaining the significance of a perfect form of spiritual intuition which is named Sri Cakra, which represents Reality both in its static and dynamic aspects and which is uniformly used as the basis of all types of worship in Indian tradition. It is a symbol of the universe (both macrocosm and microcosm) and its divine cause. There are two sets of triangles, one set inverted and the other set regular. The inverted with the two arms out-going represents the outgoing process of differentiation and diversification. It symbolises the dynamic aspect, the Sakti aspect. The other triangle with the apex on high, represents the return current of increasing assimilation, integration and identification, the static aspect, the Siva aspect. In the first, everything is ejected into separateness, polarity and even opposition. In the second it is drawn back and gathered into unity, harmony and peace. The centre holds the key of this harmonising process. In the centre there is a point where both these aspects, the Shakti and Siva aspects are in undifferentiated union. Enclosing the point is an inverted triangle representing the will, action and knowledge aspects of Sakti, the three Gunas and the three deities presiding over them. The other nine triangles are Cakras or Centres, which are ruled over by divinities presiding over forms of mind, sense and matter and then special functions which veil pure consciousness (the central point) and create the appearance of the world of mind, sense and matter and make what is whole and undifferentiated appear as limited and differentiated.

The prescribed meditation is according to the method of absorption or Laya Krama. The divinities of the eight Cakras from the outermost squares to the innermost triangle are the Saktis of the Universe of sound and form. They are the objects of experience by the individual soul and the means of such experience. They are functions of the mind

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and cognitive modifications of the mind. These are worshipped as rays emanating from the central luminary, the Divine Mother and are conceived of as being absorbed in Her.

Whether the worship is external attended with ritual or internal based upon meditation, emphasis is laid on the mental certitude that the Mother withdraws into Herself all the categories (puissances) She has projected to create the appearance of the phenomenal world of forms and sounds. When in meditation, the aspirant transcends all modifications of the mind, he realises the Mother as the Supreme Essence in whom the static or absolute and dynamic or manifesting aspects coalesce giving the highest Bliss and supreme peace. In the meditation of Sri Cakra are harmonised the personal and impersonal aspects of Reality. Ritual and meditation lead to the knowledge of Oneness, having gained which one attains the Supreme Peace.

I conclude by a prayer that says :

'O Lord, you are formless, but I have given you a form because I want to worship you. You are beyond the pale of language, but I have given you a Name, many names with which I have sung your praise. O Lord, you are omnipresent, but I have localised you in some places and gone on pilgrimages. O Lord, forgive me these faults of mine, faults which spring from my feebleness for forms and names. May I worship you not with forms, but with Intuition.'

THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS

K. KURUVILA JACOB

The message of Christmas is God's gift of Jesus Christ to mankind. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem the angels sang to the humble shepherds 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace for men of goodwill'. Is this not the goal all people look for — that man may live to the glory of God with peace on earth and goodwill for all? It is to help men towards their goal that God sent Jesus to live as man.

In the sacred books we find that God has revealed Himself from time to time to prophets and saints to show them God's way of life. But in God's wisdom and mercy, He sent Jesus, Son of God, to live on earth as a son of man not only to teach and to heal the sick in body and soul, but also to live the perfect life on earth, bearing the sorrows and sufferings which all men have, so that all may know how to live as children of God, and to help us to be children of God.

Jesus was born in the lowliest of conditions — born in a manger because there was no place in any house or inn at that time in Bethlehem. Why did God allow his son to be born in such a lowly place? It may be to show us that Jesus came for all — from the lowliest to the highest and also to show that even the lowliest child is a child of God. It may be significant to note that Gandhiji whose religion was one of humble search for Truth found that he should live as a lowly person to get his message understood by all and also that the untouchables should be called Harijans — children of God.

As a boy and youth Jesus lived and worked as a dutiful member of the family — as a carpenter — but growing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man — a perfect youth.

At about the age of thirty the call came to Jesus for the special work God wanted him to fulfill. It is evident that he was not sure of the line on which he should proceed and so he spent forty days and forty nights in prayer and fasting. During this time his mind struggled with the temptations and ambitions of his people. His first temptation was whether he could save his people by giving them economic prosperity. Food and wealth are necessary,

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but these by themselves cannot give happiness. And Jesus found the answer 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by the word of God'. His next temptation was whether he could help mankind through miracles and magic, using spiritual powers. He found that this was not the way to help man to live. God cannot be asked to change his laws of nature to suit man's needs. And finally whether he could save man by achieving power and domination through force or any available means, evil though these may be. No, it is only through God's way of righteousness that he should help man.

Jesus realised that his programme was to live day by day following God's will, teaching man to live as a child of God, healing the sick and leading men to God. Jesus taught us how to be happy. The sermon on the mount is a collection of these teachings: Happy are the poor in spirit, the merciful, the meek, the peacemakers, those who work for righteousness.

Jesus taught that it is not sufficient to love your friends — but we must love our enemies and do good to them that hate us. This is a law of life which inspired men like Tolstoy and Gandhiji. This is the answer to personal tensions and national and international tensions. Force and destructive retaliations have been tried all through the ages and have failed and will fail. This law of love — of positive non-violence is God's way. Jesus showed it — Gandhiji tried it and found it succeed where force could not. It is the responsibility of good people everywhere to learn and practise this law. Peace will come only for men of goodwill — men who practise love.

Jesus taught us not to worry. 'Fear not' was an expression which he used frequently. 'For your heavenly father knows your needs and cares for you'. One of the greatest problems of individuals and nations is 'Fear'. Jesus says 'Fear not' 'Have faith in God, your Father'.

Jesus taught us to pray. His life was one of incessant prayer. He often retired to a lonely place to pray. That was the way in which he could get strength and guidance from God — the source of all power. We are apt to neglect the source of our strength by neglecting prayer.

Jesus also taught us how to pray. The Lord's prayer is a universal prayer — which sums up the needs of all individuals and all mankind. 'Our Father' — father of all mankind and we pray for all, not for our own selfish needs. Let us learn to pray as Jesus taught us to pray.

Jesus taught us that in order to get God's blessings, we should not only repent of our sins but we should also have a forgiving heart towards others. God's mercies can flow only into a repentant heart which is also a forgiving heart.

Jesus often taught in parables to help people understand the truths and retain them in their minds. These parables explain to us the laws of the kingdom of God. 'The Lost Sheep' shows us how even the smallest of us is precious to God. 'The Prodigal Son' shows us the Fatherly love of God — the need for repentance to get forgiveness — and the need for a forgiving mind for a happy relationship in God's family. 'The Good Samaritan' shows that among God's children there is no barrier of race, caste or nationality. Any one who needs your neighbourliness is your neighbour. These are only a few of the precious gems we have in the parables of Jesus.

Jesus also taught us from incidents of daily life. In the feeding of the 'Five thousand' we learn that if we thank God for what we have and share them with those in need, we shall find that there will be enough and more. In this world, which is God's world there is enough for all.

When the disciples quarrelled among themselves as to who among them will be the greatest, Jesus took a basin of water and washed their feet. He said, 'You call me master and Lord. If I then your master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet'. Jesus taught us that the one

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who is greatest is the one who serves most. He came to minister and not to be ministered unto.

Jesus taught us that we should forgive. When he was crucified and cruelly treated he prayed 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'. What greater example can we have than this!

In the life of Jesus we see how man can triumph over the sufferings of this world, if we have God to guide us. None of us will have to suffer as Jesus did — yet with what calmness, dignity, trust he went through life — even to death.

Finally Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his own death, and pointed out that though he may not be with them in the ordinary physical form, he was with them always. God's holy spirit is available to all of us if we seek God's help as Jesus has taught us.

We all need help to live the life of peace and goodwill and Jesus shows the way. 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest'.

God's gift of Jesus to mankind is to help man to live for the glory of God and for peace on earth for men of goodwill.

This is the message of Christmas.

LALITA AND PSYCHO-THERAPY

A. KRISHNA RAO

There are a number of mal-adjusted individuals whose difficulties are not sufficiently serious to make it necessary for them to undergo psychiatric treatment. They have well developed personality and behaviour patterns which bid fair to handicap them in the economic and social adaptations of adult existence. It is interesting to note that the difficulties of such individuals had been anticipated by our ancestors, and they had prescribed for them a treatment which is simple, yet very effective and free from any of the risks attendant on prolonged psycho-analytical treatment.

Under modern psycho-therapy treatment, the patient's gaze is directed into the past. He is systematically guided towards infantilism, so that at long last, an analytically inculcated infantilism and analytically induced brooding obsession may arise, and these will be exceedingly dangerous when a latent schizophrenia exists.

Earnest R. Grooves observes in his book *Introduction to Mental Hygiene* (vide p. 34):

'It may well be that increasing prevalence of mental disease comes from the very nature of modern civilization. We live in an age dominated by machinery, and this has keyed up the speed at which we work and play and carry on many other activities to a rate which is far in excess of our capacity for biological adaptation. This accelerated tempo of living is productive of enormous mental tension and fatigue. Again modern life stimulates conflict. Large scale production, with its advertising calculated to induce desire for material objects, extends the number of human wants indefinitely and far beyond the means to acquire satisfaction except for those who are financially well-to-do. The unsatisfied desires of the individual tend to increase tension and to breed emotional conflicts.

'In a democratic society, where the social philosophy stresses equality of opportunity, the mass of less able individuals must always be discontented with their lot. The failure to achieve reacts upon the personality to cause feelings of insecurity and inferiority, and nothing is more productive of mental maladjustment than prolonged feelings of this kind. Thus the bitterness of failure, which is such a common experience, plays a part in the causation of mental breakdowns.

'Still another factor in modern life is the increasing dominance of the city. The movement of the population in the last twenty years has been steadily toward urbanization. Not more than half the population of the country has remained in rural districts. And the rural population is dominated by the city, in these days of rapid travel and communication, to an extent which was

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formerly impossible. This urban domination has imposed more complex adjustments upon the individual and it may be that personalities become disintegrated under this pressure which might have preserved normality under simple conditions and faced with less drastic demands.'

These complexes or mental cobwebs which bring about a kind of psychic confusion or irritable temper are found in quite a large number of individuals. These are comparatively of less serious nature so as to require for their removal the more difficult and complicated treatment by psycho-analysis. Our ancestors seem to have suggested a much simpler treatment in such cases. These complexes can be easily removed through daily chanting of certain hymns. The chanting of select hymns by the patient creates powerful vibrations, which, after some time, remove these complexes without leaving behind any mental scar. The 'phala-sruti' part of the hymns makes it quite clear that wonderful results can be obtained by chanting them. This treatment is simpler. It is not necessary to seek the help of a psychiatrist. Further, the time required for chanting these hymns is much lesser than for the daily analysis which is necessary under the psycho-analytic treatment.

The Hindu scriptures point out that the seat of the unconscious mind in man is not in the brain, but it is at the base of the spine, i.e. at Mulādhāra. All samskaras or complexes are deposited here in seed form. When the impulses from the unconscious mind go to the conscious and trouble the personality, there is a breakdown. The modern treatment, both surgical and medicinal, appears to be solely aimed at merely stopping the impulses of the unconscious mind from reaching the conscious mind. But it is found that this treatment cannot stop the impulses being generated in the unconscious mind. The results of chanting sacred hymns are more powerful. By chanting hymns, powerful clockwise vibrations are generated which go to completely neutralise the anticlockwise vibrations arising from the unconscious mind. Any person, who takes to daily chanting of sacred hymns, will find his mind gaining strength day by day. He will also find that his efficiency has considerably increased, and that he can discharge his regular duties with greater confidence and ease. In the case of those persons who have taken to daily meditation, the results will be found to be more distinct. They will soon find it easier to concentrate during meditation, if they begin chanting these hymns.

One of such sacred hymns that has rightly gained great renown is the *Lalita Sahasranama*, the famous litany in adoration of Goddess Lalita, the Supreme Cosmic Energy. The claim made in the 'phala-sruti' that this hymn is a unique one is not really an exaggeration (*Anena sadrisham stotram na bhutam na bhavishyati*). There is no mental complex or psychic confusion which is not removed by chanting this hymn (*Yatpāpam jāyate pumsām tatsarvam nasyati dhruvam*).

We have personally observed the unfailing results obtained by chanting *Lalita Sahasranama* in a few cases of mental breakdown where this was prescribed as a remedy. The mental depression, irritability and the psychic confusion in these persons have gradually disappeared. They have slowly regained sufficient mental strength to attend to their normal work with greater confidence, vigour and efficiency.

It may be observed that the persons chanting these hymns need not concentrate like those doing japa. Even if their mind is wandering, (and the minds of such persons suffering from psychic confusion are always found to be wandering,) the effect of chanting this hymn will not be in any way diminished, for it works on the unconscious mind directly. There is no doubt that all the marvellous results claimed under the phala-sruti part of this hymn can be literally obtained by a person who chants this hymn with devotion. It has also been found by us that in all the cases where chanting of *Lalita Sahasranama* was prescribed, no setback was found to have occurred.

If chanting of *Lalita Sahasranama* is capable of restoring mental strength by removing

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psychic confusion in the mentally maladjusted individuals, the benefits that can be derived from it by a normal person should naturally be far more valuable. For persons doing daily meditation, pārāyana of *Lalita Sahasranama* will be a useful aid. The immense benefits that can be derived by chanting 'Lalita' can well be the subject of systematic and scientific study by scholars, so that more and more people can know about them and be benefited.

SHOULD WE BLAME KARMA?

V. K. PANI

Perhaps the most misunderstood theory of Hindu Philosophy is the law of Karma. 'It was made into an excuse for inertia and timidity and was turned into a message of despair and not of hope.' It has come to mean the defeatists' tendency towards life. Any failure in life is attributed to 'It is my Prarabdha'. The defeatists' theory is not the law of Karma. It is the law of destiny. One should not be confused with the other. The law of destiny does not offer us any chance of deviating from the pre-determined path already chalked out by the cruel fate. Thus defeatists' theory of law of destiny is unprogressive and voices the message of despair and hopelessness.

The law of Karma on the other hand is a blessing even for the last of the worst sinners. It only explains that one's circumstances and conditions of life are in accordance with the Karma in the past lives, i.e. Sanchita Karma, sum total of all past actions. 'While it allows the past as determined it allows that the future is only conditioned.'

It should be understood that at the end of living the fruits allotted for the life are called 'Prarabdha', on departing each one should take next form according to the pattern ordained by the ripened ones in our total Sanchita Karma.

Different seeds, when sown, sprout out after different periods. They are not uniform, some take few days, some few weeks, some few months. Similarly our actions too have their reactions after their due passage of time.

Past actions thus determine our present station. But it should be clearly borne in mind that the law of Karma emphasizes the truth that we are given certain amount of freedom in our present life. It allows the man to use the given material in the light of his knowledge. Logically it can be explained thus: Since our past actions had a hand in moulding our present conditions of life, similarly our present actions are going to play their due role in shaping our future life.

Mud, when dry is not suitable for making the pot. When the potter makes a correct paste of it by adding enough moisture then we have the pot made easily. This is exactly what the law of Karma guarantees us. It vehemently proclaims that as we are living this life we are not only living the results of the Prarabdha but also creating Karma of tomorrow. After all, Prarabdha is also caused by the actions of the past Janma or life. It is the self-effort of the past. If our present life is miserable we have to resort to Purushakara, to better our future life.

Where does Purushakara or self-effort come from? In what way can it help us? It is true we live in happiness and sorrow depending on our Karma. Due to there being the valuable provision for us to know the right from the wrong, the Man is superior to all other creatures in as much as he is the architect of his own fortunes.

The Indriyas (senses) in co-operation with the mind translate to us the values of the

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external world of objects. The senses by themselves are useless. They are mere windows. It is the mind that utilises these windows and engenders images, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings.

The mind is such a stuff that a frequent repetition of a thought wave on it makes for itself a permanent impression. If the thoughts (vasanas) are virtuous the mind reflects the same. Consequently the person aims at higher and nobler values of life.

A short-tempered man ignorantly complains that he is always fretting and fuming because it is all due to his Prarabdha. No, it is foolish of him to blame Prarabdha for his outbursts of anger. He could as well have tried to advise himself, 'I must not become angry at trifling things, I must be cheerful, calm and tolerant'. This sort of thing he should tell himself at the time of a fit of anger. After repeated attempts it is likely he may control his temper due to the fact that the vasana in his mind is created by a deep groove of anti-anger thoughts of kindness and tolerance.

Thus the law of Karma allows for such self emancipation. Due to this fact the Karma theory is known as the brightest jewel in the crown of Hindu philosophy.

This way of overcoming weakness constitutes self-effort. The self-effort should aim not only at making us virtuous by gradual degrees but also endeavour at making us see the Real from the Unreal. This effort should be unceasing with uniform intensity. When once we know that through external world of objects we will never reach our goal then we arrive at the Real by diverting our attention into ourselves — the Reality veiled within us by the darkness of ignorance or 'Avidya'.

When once the torch of knowledge is lighted and spotlighted on to the Ultimate Real dispelling the ignoble ignorance or 'Avidya' then shall we be able to realise the Eternal Truth.

To light the torch of knowledge, the spark of self-effort should be available. There should be an awakening of the dormant intellect. Unless one possesses the spirit of inquiry it is impossible to start the journey into research of one's own Inside. Apart from mere gross activities like earning, eating, drinking and breeding man feels that he is intended for some nobler and subtler purpose.

Sharpening one's intellect on the grind-stone of Inquiry is the first step to counteract the Prarabdha. Discriminating capacity utilised in unison with Positive Intellect will surely lead the 'victim' of Prarabdha to higher realms of thought perception, opening the Inward Eye or 'Jnanachakshu', the proverbial third eye of Shiva. To this eye is revealed the nature of the Ultimate Reality which will be the Final Bliss or Sat-Chit-Ananda, merging of one's self in the Eternal Reality.

It is time for us to wake up from the slumber of Avidya. To blame Karma or God or Fate for one's miseries is worse than foolishness. The law of Karma is always giving a strong helping hand to the drowning man. The wise man instead of blaming the hand will try to stretch up his hand to catch the offered support by cultivating Purushakara or self-effort.

Our Karma, work, determines what we deserve and what we can assimilate. We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act; by knowing how to work, one can obtain the greatest results. The power is inside every man, so is knowledge; the different works are like blows to bring them out.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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चरैवेति

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

One topic discussed by Apollonius and Iarchas, the leader of the wise men of Nepal, covered the 'elements' constituting the universe. They were accepted as five. We need not attach much importance to the order in which they are enumerated in the record transmitted to us. They are named: water, air, earth, and fire as the fourth. The fifth is 'ether'. 'This ether,' says Dr Schnur, 'is immanent in all that lives, and since this world-soul pervades the universe, it, too, is a living being, constantly procreating itself' with the aid of its 'male and female components.' In the view of Iarchas, 'the subject is so vast and so much transcends our understanding' that it is impossible to find an example that fully fits it.

* * *

Indian texts arrange the 'elements' in a different order. From the point of view of subtlety, they are mentioned as Ākāśa, Vāyu, Agni, Āpah and Prithvī. For convenience, we may translate them as the same 'ether', air, fire, water and earth. In his comments on *Taittirīya*, II. i. 1., Śamkara refers to the progressive increase in the attributes associated with these technical terms. Ākāśa means 'that which is possessed of the attribute of sound and provides space for all things that have forms.' We also know that in the bodies of all creatures, it is associated with the construction of the instrument to register sound, namely, the ear. About air, the commentary speaks about its 'two attributes', its own quality, 'touch', and the quality, sound, of its cause (Ākāśa).' Likewise, fire has its own quality, colour, added on to those of its predecessors, while water and earth have their own qualities, taste and smell respectively. It is also well known that the tangible world is built of these five elements in their gross states, while behind them all there are their subtle, uncompounded states, called *Tanmātras*.

Apart from its position as the subtlest of these 'elements', Ākāśa occupies an important place in disciplines meant to help us understand intellectually and realize spiritually the highest Truth, Brahman. *Chāndogya*, VIII. i says: 'In this City of Brahman there is a small lotus, (as) a palace. Therein is the small Ākāśa. And what is in that is to be sought after, to be understood.' Śamkara reminds us that to the knower of the Self, there is no such differentiation as the goer, the going, and the place to go to, — 'there being an utter annihilation of all causes fostering the continuation of Ignorance. All longings have an end within themselves, like the Ākāśa, like the wind produced by lightning, and like the fire with all its fuel burnt off.' But for people like us, whose power of comprehension is coloured still with the distinct notions of goer, going, and goal, figures like that of the City of Brahman are often presented by our ancient texts. 'The idea of the texts is this: Let them come to the proper Path; later on we shall make them grasp the real Truth.' This 'City', then, corresponds to such helps as 'the Sālagrāma for Vishnu'.

This 'City' itself is limited, as all cities are when compared with the size of the earth, let alone the universe. 'In this small place, there is a smaller inner Ākāśa, which is Brahman.' 'Ākāśa, is Its name; this being based upon the fact of Its being, like Ākāśa, immaterial, subtle, all-pervading. That which is in this Ākāśa is to be sought after, and that is to be understood, — that is to say, having been sought after by such means as having recourse to the Teacher, attentive listening to him and the like, It is to be directly perceived.'

One may ask: If the Ākāśa within the heart is small, will not Brahman within it be smaller still? The reply is that the limitation can apply only to the internal instrument. Even it, in spite of such limitation, can, when

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duly purified, help us to catch the reflection of the Self, its glory and perfection. What is meant is not exactly the 'size' of Ākāśa. In fact, 'there is no instance that could precisely exemplify Brahman', the highest Truth which transcends the fields of sense perception, the mind, or the intellect.

Surely we cannot expect to find *all* these ideas properly expressed in the account transmitted to us through Philostratus. We should not forget the 'triple filter' involved, — the reticence of Apollonius, the lack of understanding of the recorder, Damis, and the selective presentation by Philostratus himself. Anyway, from what has come out through this inevitable filter, we can have, with the aid of texts like the Upanishads, a rough estimate of the wealth of ideas and disciplines to which the wise man of the West got fortunate access while staying on the 'cloud-girt mountain in Nepal.'

भग चरैवेति। SUBANDHU

Quotations about Apollonius are from Dr Schnur's book, *Mystic Rebels.*

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Sri Nanubhai Dave is from Bombay.

Sri T. R. Rajagopalan is from Sirpur-Kaghaznagar.

Swami Gananda is from the Ramakrishna Order.

Mrs Huguette Herbert's poetic description of Sri Ramakrishna's sadhana and views has been taken from her book entitled *L'accueil Des Dieux.* Translation from the French original has been done by Sri M. P. Pandit.

Sri K. Kuruvila Jacob is Headmaster, Christian College School, Madras. His article has been adapted from his speech on the Christmas Eve in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

Swami Nikhilananda is the Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York. His article forms the text of a television talk given over the Columbia Broadcasting System Television net work.

Swami Nityabodhananda of Geneva is a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari.* His article is the English version of a lecture delivered by him in May, 1960 at the Sorbonne University, Paris.

The Devi cult is the special interest of Sri A. Krishna Rao, M.A., M.L., who is a Bank Officer of Udipi.

Sri V. K. Pani is from Hyderabad.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT AND PROVOCATIVE STIMULUS

Religious sentiment is innate in man. Some time or other it is bound to make its presence felt. But a proper atmosphere makes things easy for its growth. That even shocks can be instrumental in developing this sentiment is clear from some of the historical incidents. Recently this truth forced itself on us when we visited Shabarimalai, a notable holy place in Kerala. The temple of Ayyappa is situated there. One must walk through deep forest at least 40 miles if he goes via Elumeli near Kottayam or 8 miles via Vandi Periyar beyond Tekkadi or Kottayam. The jungle is infested with wild animals, specially elephants. The place is simple and was known mostly in Kerala and lower Tamilnad. But in recent years it has attracted the attention of other States also. It is because only a few years ago the temple was found to be burnt at a time when nobody stayed there. Being a shrine in the deep forest and the area being bereft of primary conveniences, it was kept open only

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for some days in a year. The most important occasion was the Makara Vilakku, the light festival in the middle of January. At that time a large number of people used to visit the shrine. The rules for visiting the shrine are quite strict. The vow of Brahmacharya with control of food, dress etc. is enjoined even from two months earlier. For the last few years the number of visitors has increased to two or three lakhs on that particular occasion. The number of days the shrine is kept open has also been increased. After the desecration, police picket has been posted and now P.W.D., post office and other agencies of amenities are also working throughout the year. Permanent structures are still very few, for the place is infested with elephants, and public sentiment also is against connecting the place with motorable roads.

We had recently an occasion to visit this holy place of pilgrimage. Visiting shrines is an important item of spiritual discipline. It helps us to think of God more intensely. But that it also pinpoints some lessons of history becomes clear when we see some particular shrines. The temple of Shabarimalai has carried to us a lesson of history with more vividness and clarity. Often it has been asked, especially by outsiders—as yet away from the influence of Ayyappa, the deity of Shabarimalai —how is it that a village god has assumed such an importance in the minds of the devotees and has become a potent force for inculcation of faith in a large number of people. Ayyappa is a local deity of Kerala and is well known in Tamil villages as Aiyanar. He is also known as Sasta or Dharma, which names have suggested to some people as being a form of Buddha. Whatever may be the connection, the deity is considered, as is the uniqueness of the Hindu genius, to be the highest Deity, the supreme manifestation of Brahman. He, moreover, combines the qualities of Hari and Hara, and is the Lord of the created beings. The fact that this temple after desecration has drawn more attention reveals a unique law of religious emotion. Similar phenomenon we saw in the rebuilding of the temple of Somnath. Even in old days several times the Somnath temple was looted or broken, and again it was revived. The entire Hindu nation as it were was anxious to rebuild it. Importance of the place is surely one reason but what struck us is that a shock can act as a great provocative stimulus to bring out the dormant devotion in man about which otherwise he may be quite unaware or indifferent. The temple at Shabarimalai has done this precise part of service. An attack, an assault is sometimes beneficial, for it gives a shake to the drowsy mind and rouses the appropriate moorings. Conflict of ideas or cultures also gives rise to questioning. Hence we find Hindu students studying in Christian institutions often become aware of their own religion. It is because of this again, minorities in religion, language etc. are more conscious of their faith or culture than the vast majority.

Religious sentiment is natural in man. But how it will seek its expression cannot always be predicted. Whatever the immediate cause or the stimulus, it shows clearly that this sentiment cannot be smothered. With the onrush of militant Communism with its avowed anti-religious policy, sometimes religious people are oppressed by the doubt whether religion will be completely obliterated and also whether men will be created fully bereft of religious consciousness. Of course, in spite of forcible suppression of religion in the Communist countries, it is not completely dead. The instance of Shabarimalai instils with redoubled force the hope and faith in us that religious sentiment cannot be annihilated, though it may be suppressed for a time. And this is a great thing; specially young people suffering from doubts of every kind and often dazzled by immediate success, will be reassured that religion is of an enduring value and shocks and sufferings are meant for strengthening of faith. May Lord Ayyappa inspire more and more people into this understanding.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SIX WAYS OF KNOWING: By Dr D. M. Datta, Pub. University of Calcutta. Pp. 360, Price Rs. 12.

Students of Philosophy will heartily welcome this second edition of the book which has been long out of print since the end of the last War during which all stock of the copies with the Publishers in England was destroyed by enemy-action. The learned author has taken the occasion to make certain revisions in the book in the light of suggestions received from various scholars and also — it is interesting to learn — in the context of free and profuse comments made by George Santayana in the margin of the pages of his copy of the first edition which found its way into the hands of an American colleague of Dr Datta.

Dr Datta is one of the senior-most expounders of Indian Philosophy today and this work containing a critical study of the Vedantic (Adwaita) Theory of Knowledge with its Six Ways of Knowing and their nature is a very valuable publication, especially since it treats the subject in the setting of modern thought on the subject, both Eastern and Western. The author deals systematically with these six *pramanas* of Knowledge; Perception, *pratyaksha*, Comparison *upamana*, Non-Cognition, *anupalabdhi*, Inference, *anumana*, Postulation, *arthapatti* and Testimony, *sabda*. There is a closely reasoned analysis of these concepts and the issues they raise, comparison with other current theories in Indian and Western Philosophies and a dispassionate evaluation of their merit.

The work is authoritative, informing and to the point.

M. P. PANDIT

RELIGION AND REALIZATION: By 'Diamond'. Published by Sri S. C. Banerjee. 1, Kali Banerjea Lane, Howrah. India, Pp. 53. Price not stated.

This booklet describes the various steps and stages in realization, and avers that 'Swapna Siddha', or dream realization, is the root of all and the best of all. The author is positive that the descent of God could be seen in that state, though only through His Grace; and his theory is backed up with the authority and the experiences of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

S. RAJAGOPALAN

THE VEDAS (A Pure Revelation) Book I: By C. S. Narayana Rao, Pub. Vijaya Kusuma Publications, 62, Besant Road, Madras-14, P. 28, Price 0.75 nP.

This is a laudable attempt to provide the modern man with a helpful background for approach to the Vedas. In simple language the author discusses what is meant when the Vedas are declared to be *apaurusheya*, not of human origin, meets the objections commonly raised against this claim citing authority from the Sruti and proves how the Rishis in whose name the Vedic Hymns have come down are not *Veda-kartarah* but *Veda-drashtarah*, seers not authors. His observation that great names like Upakoshala, Uddalaka are not proper names of certain individuals but are in fact typal designations is interesting and worth further enquiry. This publication is only the first of the series that are planned and we look forward to the second book in which we are promised an exposition of 'how Adwaita, Vishishtadwaita and Dwaita did not actually begin with our Mathacharyas' but were given 'a fillip .... when they were seen on the decline'.

We wish the author every success in his earnest attempt to propagate and popularise the heritage and culture of true India.

M. P. PANDIT.

READINGS FROM SANKARA (Part I): Jayanti series No. 5. By Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan. Published by Ganesh & Co., (Madras) Private Ltd. Madras-17. Pages 77.

The author who is noted for his erudition and scholarship places before us in book form the select portions of the Commentaries on Isa and Kena upanishads—the first two in the orthodox order. The devanagari script, its transliteration and lucid English translation of the author enable the reader to understand the purport of the Acharya and the merit out of this usefulness is definitely the author's. The printing and get up is good.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

SANSKRIT

VIVEKANANDAM: By S. Suryanarayana Sastry. (44, Zeera Compound, Secunderabad A. P.) P. 142, viii. Price Rs. 3.

Vivekanandam is a happy product of the renaissance of Sanskrit language and culture that

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is gathering strength in the India of today. Though it is a rendering into Sanskrit of the author's own original work in Telugu (which we understand has been prescribed by the Calcutta University for its Intermediate Course), it reads like an original work, breathing the atmosphere of some of the older Kavyas and Mahakavyas like the *Raghuvamsha*.

The author covers in 707 verses the entire life of Swami Vivekananda — from his very birth to the untimely termination of the illustrious career. Conveniently divided into 36 chapters under suitable headings, the poem narrates the story of his childhood, education in school and college, his early searchings for the Truth of life and the world, meeting with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and the ardour with which the Master welcomed and made him his own, the temptations placed in his way, his struggles inner and outer, the passing of the Guru and the turbulent life that followed taking the fiery young spirit from place to place, country to country, and the successes that crowned his efforts to re-establish the supremacy of ancient Indian Dharma (in its higher sense) in the consciousness, not only of our own down-trodden race as it then was, but also, in the intelligentsia of America and Europe.

The author has an evident command over the language, writes in a simple and pleasing style with happy coinings for modern terms, and lets in the various *alankaras* and other poetic displays of wit, wisdom and emotion in a most natural manner. Perhaps a greater variety of metres would have added to the enjoyment of the poetry. Readers from parts other than the south may find the present phonetic arrangement of the verses a little difficult to follow in the beginning. But these are very minor points which the author may consider for the next edition. We would strongly recommend this book to be prescribed in all the Universities for rapid reading in their Sanskrit courses. An elevating subject presented in delightful form.

M. P. PANDIT.

KRISHNOLLASA: By Sri P. R. Subrahmania Sastri. Pub. S. Subrahmanyam, 'Saradindu' Tiruvanmiyur, Madras 20. Pp. 225. Price Rs. 5.

Krishnollasa is neither a literary composition nor a religio-philosophical work of the usual kind. It is an efflorescence of deep spiritual experience and urge for dedication of the soul to the supreme Lord. If it has literary merits — and they are many —, if there are profound philosophical ideas in the outpouring, — which are abundant — it is incidental and the work is great not because of them. Here is the breath of Divine Love.

Written in simple but dignified Sanskrit, this *Champu-kavya*, treatise in prose and verse, narrates the life-story and the teaching of Sri Krishna following the original Bhagavata Purana. It is a summarised version with a few departures here and there intentionally made in order to bring out more clearly the Mystic and the Sublime elements of the Krishnavatara which have got largely submerged under the popular garb of erotic and sensational imagery. More than a hundred metres have been used — some the author's own — and the reading is delightful. There are in all 424 verses in the work including those which have been quoted from other sacred texts.

One important feature of this publication is the 70 page introduction by the Editor Sri Subrahmanyam, a worthy son of the gifted father, in which, among other valuable things, there is given a connected account of the symbolism employed in this work particularly and in the traditional accounts generally. The exposition, we understand, closely follows the interpretations orally communicated to him by the author during his life-time when the manuscripts were undergoing repeated revision. Each interpretation is authenticated by relevant citations from the Upanishads and the Agamas; this section opens fresh vistas of mental illumination and spiritual felicity. It represents the cream of enlightened scholarship and guided vision and in our opinion is the most useful part of this production. Students of Sanskrit prosody will find the section on Metres very interesting and helpful.

The volume is got up well and priced reasonably. Every lover of Sanskrit and devotee of Lord Sri Krishna must possess this book.

M. P. PANDIT

SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

THE QUINTESSENCE OF VEDANTA: By Swami Tattwananda. Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Kerala. Pp. 371, Price Rs. 3.50.

The *Sarvavedanta-siddhanta-sarasangraha* of 1,006 verses is one of the numerous works ascribed to Acharya Shankara. But the language, the style and the presentation of the subject here are clearly not of that master-mind whose own writings are cast in an altogether different mould. However, this work is a convenient com-

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pendium of the main concepts and arguments of the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. The Atman, Ishwara, the five elements, the different koshas, the nature of ignorance, nature of knowledge, discrimination, faith, concentration, yoga, obstacles in yoga, the path of knowledge, the doctrine of superimposition, the direct and the indirect meaning of *Tat*, direct experience, samadhi, liberation, are some of the many topics that are dealt with in these flowing verses. The Sanskrit text is followed by an English rendering (with some notes citing references from the texts of the Upanishads etc.) verse by verse, under helpful headings.

The main work is preceded by an informative Introduction by Swami Agamananda who gives a short sketch of the life of Acharya Shankara based upon published works like the Shankaravijayas of Madhavacharya and others and also on unpublished works like *Brihat-Shankaravijaya* (of Chitsukhacharya) to which he makes reference now and again. In his note on the Philosophy and Religion of Shankara, the writer makes certain statements which need to be qualified.

M. P. PANDIT

BENGALI

SRI SRI MAHAPURUSH MAHARAJER SMRITIKATHA: Part I. Published by Ramakrishna-Shivananda Ashram, Barasat, 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Pp. 204. Price Rs. 2.50.

Srimat Swami Shivananda, well known as Mahapurush Maharaj was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second General President of the Ramakrishna Order. Books on his life and teachings have been published earlier. The present book in Bengali under review gives first a short life of the Swami by Swami Gambhirananda. Then follow the personal reminiscences of Sri Amulya Bandhu Mukhopadhyay, Sudir Chandra Biswas and Ramanikumar Dutta Gupta. Some portions of the reminiscences were published earlier in English also in the *Vedanta Kesari*. A few letters guiding the spiritual life of devotees as well as a poem on Barasat, the birthplace of Mahapurush Maharaj, have also been included. With a fine get-up and neat printing the content of the book gives a beautiful picture of the Swami in various moods of spiritual exaltation. We do hope it will be popular among the devotees.

V.

PERIODICAL

POET. June 1960: Editor: Krishna Srinivas. 4, Motilal Street, Madras-17. Pp. 32. Annual Subscription Rs. 5.

A laudable venture is this English quarterly devoted exclusively to poetry.

THE VISION: Edited by M. R. Ramaswami. (Aanandashram, Kanhangad, South India.) Annual subscription Rs. 3.50.

In dedicating the special number of this journal to Mother Krishnabai of the Anandashram, articles on Divine Mother, Indian Womanhood, the puranic stories from the *Devi Bhagavata*, *Saptasati* and anecdotes of holy women like Hemalata, Sukanya, Andal, Punitavati, Akka Mahadevi also, along with the usual features, make the issue quite enjoyable.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

UDAYACHAL (1367 B. S.): A Publication of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, 24 Parganas (West Bengal).

This is a Bengali-cum-English annual magazine, contributed and organised by the inmates and members of the above-named Ashrama.

It gives out a miscellany of Poetry, Dissertation and Essays on Science, Religion, Language and the Life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda; including a news item which covers in short all the informations as to the nature of the activities in the Ashrama and some of the brilliant achievements of its student-inmates in the field of higher education.

As it is gathered from its content, this is the second issue of its printed form. However, taking into consideration its present form of appearance, in its quality and quantitative variety, in its simple get-up and good print and some of the illustrated plates; particularly, the coloured portraiture of Sri Ramakrishna, which deserves special mention; — the sponsors may be consoled to forget the struggle-phase of this organ which they have remembered to mention in their report.

Of all the articles, the four on Science leave a flavour of promise and a depth of understanding. Articles on Swamiji also are of appreciable standard. Wishing a good future of this organ named 'Udayachal', and an expansion of its horizon and steady rise.

BR. SUDHANGSU.

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THE CALL DIVINE: Volume IX, No. 5. Published by P. M. N. Swamy, 1/8, Bhuta Nivas, Vincent Road, Matunga, Bombay-19. Pages 131-384.

This bumper issue of the 'The Call Divine' forms the Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Jayanti Souvenir. Besides interesting articles, the issue carries with it a symposium on 'How can an individual help realisation of Universal Brotherhood in the family of Humanity'. As many as 72 writers have written on the subject. A very useful addition to the spiritual book-shelf.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE, MADRAS. Part II (1960). Published by the University of Madras. Pages 199-376. Price Rs. 4.

The Bulletin under review carries with it its usual contributions and cataloguing. But one notable feature in this issue is that the section carrying reports of seminars forms the most valuable in as much as the seminars discuss fully 'East-West in Ethics and Social Practice' and 'Social Institutions and Economic Progress'. A very informative and instructive number.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, CEYLON

REPORT FOR 1958 & 59

This branch carried on, in addition to the administrative activities of the Mission, its varied cultural and religious activities during the years under review. Sunday Religious Classes were held regularly. The number of people was 75 in 1958 and 175 in 1959. The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamiji, as also Mahasivaratri, Vesak Day, Krishna Jayanti, Vijaya Dasami and Christmas Eve were celebrated with great rejoicings. The Library and Free Reading Room had 2,150 books, 25 monthly and 4 weekly Magazines, 5 Daily and 2 Bi-Weekly newspapers. The foundation stone for the International Cultural Centre was laid in 1959 by Dr Rajendra Prasad. Ramakrishna Mission Madam at Kataragama continued its humanitarian service. Free meals to 5,000 pilgrims were supplied during the annual festival. The Mission provided for education of 8,676 students with the assistance of 296 teachers in 26 schools. The total number of inmates in the orphange was 234. During the heavy floods in 1957 and civil disturbances in 1958 the Mission undertook relief work. While thanking the friends and devotees the management appeal for funds for the maintenance of the Centre.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

CHRIST JAYANTI

On the 24th December, the Christmas Eve was observed in the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in the evening. In the hall the portrait of Lord Christ was decorated. After Arati the function started at 7 p.m. with worship. After the opening song by Swami Priyananda, Swami Kailashananda welcomed the speaker and the devotees. Swami Suddhasatwananda then read the short life and some teachings of Christ. Then Sri K. Kuruvila Jacob, the well-known Headmaster of the Christian College High School spoke on the 'Message of Christmas' in English. His well appreciated speech in an adapted form is being published separately in this issue. With the proposing of a vote of thanks by Principal A. L. Krishnan, the meeting came to a close.

Birthday Celebration of Swamiji

The ninety-ninth birthday tithipuja of Swami Vivekananda was observed in the Math on Monday, January 9, 1961. The day started with group meditation followed by Mangalarati at 5 a.m. After devotional songs, chanting of select portions of the Gita and the Upanishads took place. The worship in the shrine started at 8 a.m. and came to a close at 12-30 p.m. after the homa was performed. The Chandi, Gita and Kathopanishad were also chanted ceremonially. About 1,200 devotees and 1,100 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening arati and bhajan some select teachings of Swamiji were read by Swami Suddhasattwananda and then the gathering was addressed by Swami Paramatmananda and Swami Kailashananda.

The public function came off on Sunday, January 15. Before the decorated picture of Swamiji in the hall there was silent reading of about 4,000 pages of the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. 130 devotees took part and read their respective portions. At 10-30 a.m. the gathering of devotees was addressed by Br Divya Chaitanya and Swamis Stutyananda, Paratparananda, Nandanānda, Svahananda, Shuddhasttwananda, Paramatmananda, Chidbhavananda, Turiyatmananda and Kailashananda.

At 3-15 p.m. the discourse in Tamil on Tiruvachakam by Swami Chidbhavananda, President,

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Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam began. The public meeting started at 5 p.m. with Dr A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, Madras University, in the chair. Swami Kailashananda welcomed the Chairman and the speakers. Prof. J. Satyanarayanamoorthy of Bezwada, Swami Chidbhavananda, Sri V. R. Kalyana Sundara Sastrigal of Vivekananda College, Prof. R. S. Desikan, General Editor of the Tamil Complete Works of Swamiji, addressed the gathering in Telugu, English, Sanskrit and Tamil respectively. After the distribution of prizes to college students for the best three essays on Swamiji, the President gave his address. Sri K. Balasubrahmanya Ayyar proposed the vote of thanks. After Arati and Bhajana led by Swami Priyananda, the function came to a close at 9 p.m.

Prof. Satyanarayanamoorthy said that the advent of Sri Ramakrishna fulfilled the need of the hour, in line with Sri Krishna's well-known saying. Then followed a great spiritual revival in which Swamiji had a towering role to play. He also dealt on Swamiji's dynamic strength, eloquence and spirituality, which culminated in his stress on Madhava Seva, service to the people looking upon them as God.

Swami Chidbhavananda in the course of his speech dealt on Swamiji's behest to us: Stick to principles and not to personalities, a behest very difficult to practise, particularly regarding personalities like Swamiji, who are the embodiments of principles. Swamiji was a spiritual dynamo. Every great Acharya has a twofold message—one for the age, the other for all times, yuga dharma and sanatana dharma. Swamiji's twofold message for the age is service of the down trodden and service of the motherland. Swamiji was an awakener of souls and the secret of it was his perfected character. Awakening of souls, we must remember, is real education. So when he gave his eternal message: educate, educate and educate, he meant that education must be character-building and not curriculam-centered. Character is all important; without it everything else is useless. India must follow his ideas on Education, if it is to progress. Another message of Swamiji is the gospel of strength. 'Strength is life. Weakness is death', he said and by this he meant Spiritual, Moral, Mental and Physical Strength.

Sri V. R. Kalyana Sundara Sastrigal traced Swamiji's life in brief; the great agnosticism of Swamiji in his youth; and how Sri Ramakrishna altered him thoroughly. Their intimate relationship is like that of Nara and Narayana, the object and the image, the moolavar and utsava vigrahas. Swamiji's great love for India and her people was immeasurable. He realised the crying need of India then to be not so much religion but food and succour of the downtrodden. That is why he worked for the uplift of the country all his life and struggled and strove for India in America.

Prof. R. S. Desikan described Swamiji as an apostle of strength. But his strength was six-paced or six-faced like the sixfaces of Subrahmanya. He had the strength of the physic, of intellect, of heart, of Tapas, of knowledge and lastly of renouncing even Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Dr Mudaliar began by recalling his happy association with the Ramakrishna Mission over many years and his privilege to have come in contact with Swami Ramakrishnanandaji. Swami Vivekananda, he said, was a great patriot and a great saint. He had a prophetic vision. He said sixty years ago that if the Western Nations continue to go the way in which they are going now, fifty years hence, they will crumble down, in confusion and chaos. And fifty years thence, what he foretold came to pass, as we well know. Swami Vivekananda was responsible for rekindling and setting ablaze the spiritual current that was almost dying out in India. He was a champion of the Hindu faith but his message was universal in outlook, for he imbibed it from one, who was the embodiment of all religions—the Saint of Dakshineshwar. The Master lived and showed in practice the truth that all religions lead but to the same goal, as so many rivers reach but the ocean in the end. And that message was the message of Swamiji too. Dr Mudaliar then traced the events leading to the Swamiji's triumphant success in the Parliament of Religions, the difficulties that beset Swamiji's path and his iron will and strength which overcame them all. Madras could be rightly proud that it was primarily responsible for Swamiji's trip to America. Swamiji's appeal to the youth of India 'I want a 100 youngmen to dedicate themselves to the country, and then India shall rise again,' Dr Mudaliar felt was yet to be fully heeded and responded to. He appealed to the young men to join the Mission in large numbers, particularly for the furtherance of education and medical relief. He then concluded by paying his tribute to the wonderful work carried on by the Mission in foreign countries.

The birthday tithi of Sri Ramakrishna falls on February 17.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna was sitting in Balaram's drawingroom in Calcutta.

Sri Ramakrishna: 'If you want to realize God, then you must cultivate intense dispassion. You must renounce immediately what you feel to be standing in your way. You should not put it off till the future. "Woman and gold" is the obstruction. The mind must be withdrawn from them. One must not be slow and lazy. A man was going to bathe; he had his towel on his shoulder. His wife said to him: "You are worthless. You are getting old, and still you cannot give up some of your habits. You cannot live a single day without me. But look at that man! What a renouncer he is! He has sixteen wives and he is renouncing them one by one." The husband replied: "Renouncing his wives one by one! You are crazy! If a man wants to renounce, does he do it little by little? He won't be able to renounce. But I can. Look! Here I go!"

'That is called intense renunciation. No sooner did the man discriminate, than he renounced. He went away with his towel on his shoulder. He didn't turn back to settle his worldly affairs. He didn't even look back.

'He who wants to renounce, needs great strength of mind. He must have a daredevil attitude like a dacoit's. Before looting a house, the dacoits shout: "Kill! Murder! Loot!"

'One cannot realize God without renunciation. Who will accept my words? I have been seeking a companion, a sympathetic soul who will understand my feelings. When I see a great devotee, I say to myself, "Perhaps he will accept my ideal." But later on I find that he behaves in a different way.

'A ghost sought a companion. One becomes a ghost, if one dies from an accident on a Saturday or a Tuesday. So, whenever the ghost found someone who seemed to be dying from an accident on either of these days, he would run to him, hoping that at last he had found his companion. But such was his ill luck that everyone revived. The poor thing could not get a companion.'

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WHY VIVEKANANDA

Swami Vivekananda's clarion call left an indelible impression on the minds of the youth of the last generations. The present generation of youth naturally often hears about him from them. But it is not always that boys know about him, for often they are just growing into manhood and trying to know about the different values of life. A young college boy, fresh from school, once put the question: Why Vivekananda? The idea is, what is the necessity of knowing about another person of old, when there are so many other great living men. The question is pertinent. Two points are involved in it. First, why should we read the lives and teachings of great men? And then, what is the speciality of Vivekananda? The answer to the first question is, because it makes us real men. The words of great men give us a direction, inspire us, stir up our nobler emotions, generate hope and implant faith. In trials and tribulations we look at similar experiences of great men and regain strength of mind, so that we do not break down at their pressure. And knowing the life and teachings of great men is possible only through books on and by them.

Our boys read many books, no doubt. But books are of various types to suit the variety of tastes and temperaments. They may be good, bad or indifferent. For purposeful reading it is necessary to choose the right type of books. Specially in younger days it is necessary to be acquainted with ennobling thoughts. In the prevalent atmosphere of increasing materialism, rank hedonism and cynical disbelief in nobler life it is not easy to know of the higher values. So instructions are necessary. Examples are still more so. But in the absence of proper instructors books are very valuable, specially because too much nearness to imperfect teachers takes away much of the appealing quality. So it is noble books primarily that can transmit the higher ideas to young boys at their impressionable age, for books are free from the defects of conveying medium. Of course, good men there are in every walk of life. And they surely can transmit the essential goodness and humanity of man to the younger generation. But what we are stressing is that the refreshing, salutary influences of noble writings are immense. Worthy and ennobling reading is therefore essential. Books are said to either divert or entertain, inform and instruct, or inspire and elevate. It is necessary therefore to choose the right type of books. The baneful effect of unhealthy literature can be counteracted only by them.

How a book can change a life and powerfully influence a nation can be seen from the example of Gandhiji. He became acquainted with Ruskin's 'Unto the Last' and Tolstoy's writings and his ideas took a shape. Devendra Nath Tagore by chance came across a leaf of the Upanishad and his life took a turn. Many such cases can be mentioned.

So we see that young men and women must be acquainted with the writings of the leaders of society. Such books will be a fine and potent vehicle to cleanse and transform their ideas and impulses, endeavours and attainments. These are books which educate, enlighten and edify. Boys should know several of them. And they of course will have their favourite authors. We feel, however, along with a general reading of others, a boy should thoroughly read one idealistic author of repute. Thoroughly knowing the ideas of one

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thought-leader gives a clarity of thinking and systematic way of approach.

'Lives of great men all remind us, that we also can make our lives sublime.' Our life is like a lamp. The lamp of life is to be ignited from another lamp. Hero-worship is inborn in man. It is more pronounced in younger days. Children follow the elders. They often live in a make-believe world. The adolescents become gradually aware of social norms. This awareness is often painful. Definite guidance is a necessity. But gradually the budding youth is oppressed by the why of things. Even things which are accepted by elders as norms are also enough to create these questionings in them. These cannot be answered always by elders, for it is humanly impossible to answer all. Books satisfy their inquisitiveness and quell the doubts. If these books are of great men honoured in society, they become more impressive. If they are written by holy men of realization their effect will be still more.

While it will do if a boy reads any of the well-known writers of serious thoughts, Swami Vivekananda, we feel, has a special claim. It is because he has spoken about the fundamental thoughts of mankind. And that too in such a language that they can stir up all young men. Swamiji has been described as the awakener of souls. The purpose of all reading, all education is just that. Once inner awakening comes, the rest will follow of themselves. Of his writings Romain Rolland says:

> I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!

Enthusiasm is a great necessity in creating impressive characters. Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches have the capacity of creating immense enthusiasm. Once enthusiasm is created, it may seek its expression through various channels in accordance with the aptitude of the man. Writers, social workers, students and many others of various walks of life have found that Swamiji's writings generated an unbounded enthusiasm in them, which expressed itself in their particular fields. Enthusiasm to be fruitful requires steady attitude of optimism and hopefulness. The problems of life, specially in the economically underdeveloped countries, are apt to make the stout hearts disheartened. The message of hope is a special quality of Swamiji's writings. He spoke about the essential goodness of man. He had drawn our attention to the underlying aspect of human personality. That is why in his writings we find so much glorification of the Atman which is the true, unchangeable nature of man. Even a glimpse of that understanding is apt to make a man hopeful, bold and pure. Infinite energy and unlimited enthusiasm will naturally follow. Moreover, his direct energizing words also give these qualities in an abundant measure. As a sample, read the following lines:

> Up, up, the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone forth — India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy. Rejoice! The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land resistless, boundless, all-absorbing. Every man to the fore, every good will be added to its forces, every hand will smooth its way, and glory be unto the Lord!

Is faith necessary? Abundant faith in oneself and in the destiny of India will be generated if we read:

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Have faith in yourselves, and stand upon that faith and be strong; that is what we need. 'We are the Atman, deathless and free; pure, pure by nature. Can we ever commit any sin? Impossible!'—Such a faith is needed. Such a faith makes men of us, makes gods of us. Have faith that you are all born to do great things! Each one of us will have to believe that every one else in the world has done his work, and the only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect has to be done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon ourselves. Give up the awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong and have this *Shraddhā*, and everything else is bound to follow.

Along with energy and hope, strength is a predominant quality his writings give. In fact, he has been described as a prophet of strength. As strength is urgently necessary for everybody this message has a great value. 'Strength is life, weakness is death,' was that message. His religion is a religion of strength. Even in the Upanishads he found this message of *Abhih*, fearlessness, coming out like a bombshell.

Our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football, than through the study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men. What I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, *Kshatravirya* plus *Brahmateja*.

Is patriotism necessary? Swamiji's writings are full of patriotic fervour. Love of the country is a predominant note there. His exhortations are potent enough to fill the minds of our youth with the love of the nation and its people. In our country where so much poverty, illness and ignorance persist, it is necessary for the advanced people to feel for them. Do they need a plan of work? They will have it too.

Feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming constant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.

Swamiji is essentially international as all religious people ought to be. So his nationalism too is such that it does not militate against consideration for other nations of the world. And so he advocated removal of all exclusiveness.

We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. We have paid the penalty; let us do it no more.

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All such foolish ideas that Indians must not go out of India, are childish. They must be knocked on the head; the more you go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you and your country. If you had done that for hundreds of years past you would not be here today, at the feet of every nation that wants to rule India. The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead.

Is love of the past necessary for getting clear vision and proper direction? Swamiji's love of ancient India and its great heritage is second to none.

Nowadays, everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life.

Do we want our children to be rational, strong, virile at the same time possessed of purity and abundant sympathy? Swamiji's writing is full of all these ideas. So we see that Swamiji's writings are capable of giving us the fundamental virtues of hope, enthusiasm and strength etc. A man endowed with these basic qualities is fit to face life squarely and he will not be cowed down by its troubles and turmoils, dangers and difficulties, despairs and frustrations. It is because of these qualities of his writings we feel that in younger days our boys and girls should be acquainted with them. Thereby strong characters will be formed. And once many such characters are formed, the society may experiment with any type of political and social organization or idea; it is bound to progress. The bane of modern times, as is often said, is the general collapse of values, of the crisis of character. With the high achievements in acquiring the advanced tools of civilization, it is urgent that modern man has the noblest reaches of culture. Then will the earth be a veritable heaven which is the goal of all social workers. We strongly believe, Swami Vivekananda's writings have the requisite qualities for bringing in such higher virtues in society and hence recommend them with all the force at our command to the young men and women of India.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

At Alambazar Math

It was in 1890 that, with Swamiji, I started from Baranagar Math to the Himalayas. In 1895, at the importunity of Swami Abhedananda, I was compelled to return to the Math from Jaipur to see the ceremony of the birthday anniversary of the Master.

It was at Jaipur that I met Abhedananda and Nirmalananda. Swamiji had written to me advising me to hold a meeting with his devotees at Alwar. For that purpose I stayed at the house of Govinda Sahayji, a disciple of Swamiji. There I founded a society to hold weekly sittings and then I left for Delhi. At Delhi I stayed for a few days and then came back to Alambazar Math *via* Etawah and Allahabad. At that time Premananda, Niranjananda, Sivananda, Ramakrishnananda,

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Adbhutananda and Satchidananda (Buro Baba) and others were in the Math.

Swamis Brahmananda (Raja), Yogananda, Saradananda, Trigunatita and others spent most of their time at Calcutta. Let me give here in brief an account of what happened in the Math during the two years before Swamiji's return after his first voyage to America. At the latter part of the year 1895, that is, six years after I had left Baranagar Math, I came back to Alambazar Math.

An account of Alambazar Math

Our Math was then in a quadrangular two-storied house on the south of the road very near the Alambazar crossing. In front of the Math-building, overlooking the public road there were verandahs, both on the ground floor and the first floor, resting on rows of pillars in pairs. The main gate of the house was on the west. Entering the gate one would find a spacious court and the building. To reach the first floor there were two flights of stairs, one outside the house and the other inside. As one went up the former, one came to a big room, from east to west, to be used as a parlour. Upstairs inside the house there were a chapel, three bed rooms and a store room. Just below them there was the kitchen, before which there was an open verandah where people would have their dinner. Just opposite the Math there was the mansion of Jay Krishna Chatterji, with stout pillars forming its facade. The Math-building was so spacious, but the monthly rent was only ten rupees. The reason was that it was rumoured that two persons had committed suicide in the house. So people thought twice before renting it. The ground floor of our Baranagar Math was heaped with rubbish and infested with snakes; this house was also a haunt of spirits.

Here I learnt from Ramakrishnananda that there was such a dire want at the Math that on days they were without even a few pice to purchase sugar-candy to make a syrup to be offered to the Master. There were two drawers in a table in which the meagre amount of money they had was kept. The table is still there at Belur Math in Jnan Maharaj's room.

Whenever in dire penury Ramakrishnananda happened to be in a fix as to what he should offer to the Master, there reached the Math a big roll of sugar-candy, a pot of Nabin's Rasagolla (a kind of sweet) and other articles required for the service of the Master, sent by the wife of the late Mahendranath Mukhopadhyay through a servant. Many a time such a thing happened. Ramakrishnananda said that none else had freed him from worry as she did at the time of want by sending articles for the service of the Master. Ramakrishnananda had a deep regard for her. I too sometimes went to see her. She bore me great affection.

In the Math we usually had rice, pulse and a vegetable curry only to eat. On days slices of the core of dried cocoanut with pulse served the purpose of a side dish. At night we had bread without a trace of ghee. One day a gentleman sent us some milk to offer to the Master. For us it was like a windfall. Before we sat for dinner our talk was that there was the milk-prasadam (consecrated food) and that milk is nutritious. Scarcely had a spoonful of milk been served when the monks jocosely asked one another, 'Hallo, have you gained strength, have you?' That joyous shouting resounded in the whole Math house that day. Words fail to give a true picture of our joyous life at that time. Many an episode like this might be given, but this book must not be allowed to grow too bulky. This trifling incident will suffice to show how we enjoyed ourselves at Alambazar Math even in 'chill penury'. Let me add further that Sudhir (Suddhananda) then came very often to the Math. Atmananda (Sukul), Khagen (Vimalananda), Kanai (senior) and others frequented the Math. Every Saturday in the afternoon Kanai would come with articles Ramakrishnananda would require for the service of the Master and would go back at night-fall on Sunday.

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Ramakrishnananda had a sort of scabies in both his legs. Kanai would attend on him. There would be an aggravation of the disease in winter when scratched pieces of dried skin like scales of fish would come off. After many a medicine had failed, the medicine and ointment of Saspur, Burdwan, had some effect. Jogen Chatterjee of Baranagar was a constant visitor to our Baranagar Math. He also employed himself in the service of all in many ways. We became acquainted with him at that time. At last he went with his wife to Kashi to live there. It was there that he lost his wife. He had no relation of his own. Two or three months before Swamiji came back from America, Mr Chatterjee had come to the Math from Banaras. After coming down to Alambazar Math, Swamiji initiated Kanai and Mr Chatterjee in the vow of Sanyasa. Kanai was christened Nirbhayananda and Mr Chatterjee, Nityananda.

Study and teaching

Swami Abhedananda read the *Sariraka Bhashya* (Sri Sankara's commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras*) with Swami Dhanaraj Giri, Mandaliswar (head of a school of Sanyasis) of Rishikesh. Every afternoon for about two hours Sivananda and I read the commentary on Vedanta. Every mail conveyed to us there the speeches of Swamiji printed in booklets. With great avidity did we pore over them and discuss them. Swamiji now came to London and called for Swami Saradananda. We sent him off by *S. S. Rewa.* In a few days the call came for Swami Abhedananda. Swamiji in his letter asked him to take all the Vedic classics with him.

We went to the abode of the savant Satyavrata Samasrami and purchased all the volumes of the Vedic books, *Bibliothica Indica,* compiled by him and published by the Asiatic Society. Then Swami Abhedananda boarded the ship and we gave him a send-off. On the occasion we had a photograph taken at the jetty. A copy might still be found in many houses.

Vedic school

Many know that the Raja of Khetri was an initiated disciple of Swamiji. My ardent persuasion resulted in the founding of a Vedic school at his capital. For long I had been keen on reintroducing Vedic studies in Bengal where it had become obsolete. Swami Ramakrishnananda encouraged me to translate my wish into a fact by bringing down a Vedic scholar from a place like Banaras. I then entertained the notion that there was no dearth of such scholars in Banaras. But the pity of it is that when the scholarly Babu Pramadadas Mitra, a wealthy man of Chaukhamba, Banaras, was written to for a Brahmin Vedic scholar to be sent to the Math, he in reply stated that no such scholar was to be found at Banaras. Those that were, knew only Swarapatha and Hastapatha (chanting with proper articulation). But he wrote to say that he would be on the look out for the proper man. I was mortified to learn that even at a place like Kashi a Brahmin with true Vedic scholarship was not easily available.

Barrackpore

At this time I read in the newspaper that Bhudeb Babu had, on his death, left a legacy of more than a hundred thousand rupees for the spread of Vedic education and a beginning was made to realise his wish. I felt a desire to see how they were imparting Vedic education.

My first effort was in going to see Surendranath Banerjee at his home at Manirampur and requesting him to start a movement through his 'Bengalee' in favour of Vedic education. Suren Babu was then pacing on the embankment of the Ganga in front of his house. I had to wait on a bench at the main gate for some time. After his walk Suren Babu came and said, 'I have not a moment to spare. Please wait, I am coming in no time.' A short time after, he appeared in his choga and chapkan. 'Are you one of the Swami Vivekananda Math?', asked he.

'Yes,' I replied, 'you are a famous patriot and I have come to see you.' 'Yes, I make a

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slight effort to be such,' said he. 'We at the Alambazar Math want to start a Vedic school,' said I. 'It would be so good if you start a movement to that end in your "Bengalee". I have come to make that request.' 'Where are you going to now,' asked Suren Babu. 'To Bhatpara', said I, 'to discuss it with the Pandits (scholars) there.' He said, 'It is a nice proposal. Surely I shall start a movement for it.'

We were thus engaged in our conversation when there stood before the house a carriage drawn by one horse. On seeing it Surendra Babu said to me, 'I am for Barrackpore station. Please come with me, I shall drop you at the road leading to Bhatpara.' I was asked to sit by him in the carriage. His secretary took the front seat. While driving we were engaged in conversation. 'Why don't you join us in the publicity branch of the Congress,' said he. In reply I said, 'To me your Congress appears to be nothing but a monstrous show. For three days in the year there is a great stir, a noisy tumult, and then there is a perfect quiet. Millions of people, without food, with none to help them, are scattered in the country, you know nothing of them. None of your workers is to be found at the hovel of a cultivator.'

With annoyance he said, 'Can you be like God at every place at every time? Many preachers and workers of that type are there in our party.' 'I am unfortunate,' said I, 'not to have come across even one of your workers like that.' He was silent. After some time I resumed, 'Well, Sir, can you not arrange that a native concern carries on import and export trade like the P. & O., Finlay Muir, Mackinon Mackenzie and other companies?'

'Yes, we are on the look out for that,' said Surendra Babu. As he said this he dropped me on the road to Bhatpara and himself drove away.

(To be continued.)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

BRAHMACHARI SARADA CHAITANYA

Sri Ramakrishna's life is a wonder of human history. Son of a poor Brahmin priest from an out-of-the-way village of India, Sri Ramakrishna, without any schooling whatsoever is being worshipped by hundreds and thousands throughout the world as the prophet of the Modern Era. Wonderful is the life and more wonderful is the way it became known to the world. Within ten years of his passing away this 'illiterate genius' of India became one of the great teachers of the world. Unlike Buddha and Christ no royal power on earth did broadcast his life and message to the world. Nor was there any organised church behind him. How then he became known to the world? As a flower attracts the people around it by the sweet smell and fragrance it diffuses, likewise the lotus of Sri Ramakrishna's life by the sweetness of its character and the unprecedented love for God conquered many a heart from far and near. Great savants from East and West have been attracted to this unsophisticated life of the child of nature. Poet Tagore writes:

'Diverse courses of worship
From varied springs of fulfilment,
Have mingled in your meditation.
The manifold revelation of the joy of the Infinite
Has given form to a shrine of unity in your life.
Where from far and near arrive salutations
To which I join my own.'

Max Muller and Romain Rolland have written biographies of this prophet of Modern India. And, what respect and admiration they had for him. Romain Rolland in the introduction of his book on Sri Ramakrishna says: 'I am bringing to Europe as yet unaware of it, the fruit of a new autumn, a new message of the soul, the symphony of India, bearing

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the name of Ramakrishna. . . . It is always the same Man — the Son of Man, the Eternal, Our Son, Our God reborn. With each return he reveals himself a little more fully, and more enriched by the universe. . . . Allowing for differences of country and time Ramakrishna is the younger brother of our Christ.' And Max Muller! One day in spite of heavy rains he came to see off Swami Vivekananda, the illustrious disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, at the London Railway Station. Admonished by the Swami for doing so that king of philosophers of the Western World replied: 'Oh Swami, it is not every day one can see a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.' Apart from Max Muller and Romain Rolland there are a host of philosophers and scientists, poets and literateurs who have felt kinship with Sri Ramakrishna. Currently another noted writer, Mr. Christopher Isherwood is engaged in writing a biography of the Master.

Naturally, a question may peep into our mind. Why is Sri Ramakrishna so much adored by the galaxy of savants both from the East and the West? What have they found in him? He was not a scientist, nor a philosopher, neither a poet nor a literateur. Then what he was? He was a messenger of God. An embodiment of purity and godliness, the sole concern of whose life was God and God alone. He was in this world but not of this world. He in his life demonstrated that the existence of God is not mere poetry, nor a hallucination. It is more real than reality itself. He encountered God in his own life, and came face to face with truth. And in chorus with the Vedic sage of the hoary past proclaimed: 'Hear ye the dwellers on earth — the children of Immortal Bliss. I have known the Truth — the Self-effulgent One, beyond the pale of all darkness. This is the only way to Immortality.' Sri Ramakrishna's life is a challenge to atheism and agnosticism. Rightly has it been said by Mahatma Gandhi: 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life enables us to see God face to face. No one can read the story of his life without being convinced that God alone is real and that all else is an illusion.' If we go through the pages of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* we will find time and again the Master is telling: 'I have seen God, I have talked to Him. If one could shed tears for one day and one night for the sake of God one is sure to see Him.' And what he said was from the pages of his life — the outcome of first-hand experience he earned through the practice of different religions of the world.

Sri Ramakrishna is the Master of harmony of religions. It is religion which has enriched this world giving birth to such god-men as Buddha and Christ, Sankara and Chaitanya, Zarathustra and Laotze. They are the salt of the earth. If we wipe out the names of these great souls from the pages of our history what will remain then? A gloomy picture of a savage world, a world full of fights and quarrels, wars and dissensions. But it is also this same religion which caused much bloodshed slaughtering myriads of innocent souls goaded by bigotry and fanaticism. This is undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the religious history of the world. Paying no heed to the message of love and non-violence preached by the Karuna incarnate, Buddha and the commandment of Christ, 'Love thy neighbour as thy self', followers of different religions fought each other for the vain prestige of supremacy. Sri Ramakrishna's life puts an end to this quarrel. For in his life he proved to the world that all religions are true. Each religion is a path which leads an aspirant to the ultimate goal of supreme realization as all roads lead to Rome. No religion is false. No Incarnation of any religion is a charlatan. It is blasphemous to say so. If we insult a religion or an Incarnation of any religion we insult our own. For in reality there is no difference between 'your' religion and 'my' religion. Each religion is a mirror which reflects the glory of the one and the same God who is addressed by the Hindus as Bhagavan, by the Christians as 'Father in Heaven' and by the Zoroastrians as Ahura Mazda. This is the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna. And we must remember that he did not arrive at this

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conclusion by intellect alone. He practised Islam and Christianity. And through these paths too reached the same goal as he reached through different sects of Hinduism. From the direct experience gained in his own life Sri Ramakrishna preached the message of harmony of all religions. He gives the example: As you all come to me to this temple garden certainly you do not follow the same route or use the same mode of conveyance. Some of you come by boat, some by hackney carriage, some on foot. But the destination is the same. Likewise each religion is a means which leads the aspirant to the goal of highest realization — God.

Let us hope and pray that the thread of unity that has been found in the life of Sri Ramakrishna will give birth to a religious understanding where Hindus and Muslims, Christians and Zoroastrians, will find a common platform to shake hands with one another.

Let me conclude with a small poem composed by Sri Aurobindo, the well-known mystic-philosopher of India, saying that Sri Ramakrishna's birth is proof that

God hath sounded for the trumpet
That shall never call retreat.
He is shifting out the hearts of men
Before His judgment seat.
Oh, be swift my soul to answer Him!
Be jubilant my feet
While God is marching on.

HOMAGE TO SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BRAHMACHARI DIVYA CHAITANYA

Surely, Sri Ramakrishna has awakened the spiritual consciousness of thousands of men and women of the East and the West. He has become the beacon light for the modern age and his advent has brought about a great renaissance of religious ideas more particularly of Hinduism with its varied sects. The world listened once more to the call of the Lord — the voice that our motherland is fortunate to hear from time to time and that is: Arise O man, awake from the darkness of delusion and seek the Lord who resides in our hearts and take refuge in Him, for He will deliver you from the miseries of this world. It was Swami Vivekananda who was chosen by his master to deliver this message to the world.

According to Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda was one of those ancient sages who reside in the Saptarshi Mandal and are born commissioned by the Lord to teach mankind. Like the Homā bird in the story which flew upwards the moment it obtained sight escaping from the danger of being dashed against the ground to reach its own region where its mother lived, so also in Swami Vivekananda, at a very young age there was that intense longing for the realisation of the Supreme, an intense eagerness to remain absorbed in the thought of the Infinite which reached its culmination and destiny at the feet of his master Sri Ramakrishna. Then he desired to remain in the exalted state of samadhi continually and to come down to the sense plane only once in a while to eat a little food for the upkeep of the body. But his master corrected him saying that this sort of absorption in samadhi was too small an ideal for him and that he was to fulfil a still higher ideal of being a shelter unto all like a huge banian tree — that he himself must forego the bliss of samadhi in order that he might retain his enlightened ego ministering to the spiritual needs of mankind. And like the great Sankaracharya of old, who with his brilliant intellect and insight propounded the Vedic religion and propagated its message throughout the length and breadth of the country establishing monasteries and monastic orders within a short span of life of thirty-two years, we find Swami Vivekananda too commissioned by the Divine, crossing the ocean for the first time in the history of the

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Hindu monks with a message for the West, as Buddha had a message for the East, and appearing before the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago as the proud son of India in his twenty-ninth year, and thanking the West in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, in the name of the mother of all religions and in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

With gigantic intellectual power, world-moving spiritual force and prophetic vision Swamiji worked in the West during the short period that he spent there and brought to light the eternal principles of Vedanta, the universal religion and glorifying the religion of the Hindus, he raised the prestige of India among the Western people.

'The cyclonic monk that Swamiji was, he was hailed by his countrymen on his return home from the West and in him they discovered not only the fulfilment of their human aspiration after perfection but they also found one who touched the tenderest chords of their hearts, who stood as a champion of the very cause that was nearest and dearest to them, namely the sacred cause of their religion and motherland.'

Swami Vivekananda visualized a glorious period of India's history when her past glories will pale like stars before the rising sun. The downtrodden condition of the masses saddened his heart. Swamiji had a master plan for the regeneration of India and this he gave out to his countrymen; and mighty minds of India have responded to his call and in this connection we recall what Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation spoke once about Swami Vivekananda when he visited the monastery at Belur in 1923.

> 'I have come here not to preach non-co-operation, not to preach charka, I have come here to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated today. I have gone through his works very thoroughly and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. I ask you, young men not to go away empty-handed without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died.'

To give a practical shape to his ideas Swamiji, following the example of the great ancient masters, has organised the Ramakrishna Order of monks with the twin ideals of Renunciation and Service and started several monasteries including the one at Madras.

What all the religious literatures of the world have attempted to say are given in the form of aphorisms in four memorable sentences by Swami Vivekananda and they are:

> (1) Each Soul is potentially Divine. (2) The goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature, internal and external. (3) Do this either by work, worship, psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these and be free. (4) This is the goal of all religion. Doctrines and Dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.

The well-planned emblem of the Mission is prepared in tune with the above idea, the rising sun, the wavy waters, the lotus, all these encircled by a serpent represent the four yogas and by these the vision of the Paramatman represented by the Swan is attained. Sri Ramakrishna has in him, Swamiji said, the fulfilment of all these paths of yoga and is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers of religion.

The best path for this age is bhaktiyoga, the path of bhakti prescribed by Narada: to sing the name and glories of God and pray to Him with a longing heart, 'O God, give me knowledge, give me devotion, and reveal Thyself to me!' The path of karma is extremely difficult. Therefore one should pray: 'O God, make my duties fewer and fewer; and may I through Thy grace, do the few duties that Thou givest me without any attachment to their results! May I have no desire to be involved in many activities!' It is not possible to give up work altogether. Even to think or to meditate is a kind of work. As you develop love for God, your worldly activities become fewer and fewer of themselves. And you lose all interest in them.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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HOLY MOTHER AMIDST TRIALS AND TOILS

SHARADA

The true test of greatness of a personality is its behaviour amidst the trials and tribulations of life. Anyone can become great and glorious amidst favourable circumstances, and amidst people who are understanding and sympathetic. But when one is put under most trying and unfavourable circumstances, and surrounded by people who misunderstand at each and every step, then only the true nature is tested.

The life of Sri Saradamani Devi, or more well known as Holy Mother is indeed one of continued trials and troubles, most of which were in fact, self-imposed ones. The field of work of Sri Ramakrishna was the field of spirituality, and that of Swamiji was broadcasting the message of the Master to the world. But the Holy Mother chose the field of ordinary family life, full of ignorance, misunderstanding, jealousies, diseases, poverty and privations. This is the field which actually needs utmost patience, endless endurance and hardest labour.

From her very early age the Mother had to face many difficulties. She was born in a very poor family, and as the eldest daughter had to shoulder heavy responsibilities and toil very hard. After marriage, the people unable to understand the religious ecstasies of Sri Ramakrishna used to criticise her as the wife of a mad man, but amidst all these Mother would remain calm and was sweetness and love incarnate. Her patience and forbearance used to astonish all.

These troubles and difficulties deepened dark after the passing away of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna had told her once, 'You will stay at Kamarpukur; you will grow pot-herbs, eat your rice with greens and call on Hari'. Mother carried the wish of the Master to its very words. When she went to Kamarpukur after Master's passing away there was none to look after her, nor she had any means of livelihood. The little allowance of seven rupees which Trailokyanath, the grandson of Rani Rasmani had granted had been stopped because of the conspiracy of the cashier of the temple and her relatives. So her life at Kamarpukur became not only solitary but one of dire poverty and privation.

There were days when she had boiled little rice but had no salt to savour it with and also there were days when she could not light a lamp and had to spend the nights without light, because of the scarcity of oil. Of course, her mother tried hard to take her back to Jayaramvati but Mother refused to go. Even when she went afterwards she came back soon. Her mother seeing her shrunken body and tattered clothes could not check her tears and tried her best to hold her back, but Mother replied, 'Now I am going to Kamarpukur, mother, afterwards it will be as He ordains'.

Not only dire poverty but also severe criticism, Mother had to face during this time. According to the bidding of the Master, she continued to wear her bracelets and also a thin red bordered saree instead of a wholly white saree. There arose severe criticism from the rural people of Jayaramvati, who were without any liberal ideas and sympathy. To them, a widow to wear such things appeared as most scandalous. When their hostile gossip reached the ears of Mother, she immediately decided to remove the bracelets which would pacify those rural critics. But soon she had a vision of the Master who forbade her to remove the bracelets and made her understand that actually there was no necessity of her following the formalities of a widow.

Gradually after a long time the tale of Mother's misery reached the ears of the devotees of Master at Calcutta. They decided to bring her to Calcutta and after arranging for her accommodation, begged her to go over

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there. Mother, though at first hesitated, could not but agree to such earnest calls of the devotees.

But this did not put an end to all her troubles. As the number of her devotees increased, her material condition was improved. Now this attracted all her relatives and brothers. They began to pester her for monetary help or troubled her about family dissensions. Her youngest brother Akshay had passed away leaving a widow and a child and had begged his sister to take care of them. As his wife Surabala was almost mad, Mother had to take care of her as well as her child Radhu. What a lot of trouble these two gave to Mother was indeed beyond description.

The quarrelsome half-mad Surabala and the most obstinate Radhu were indeed a great source of trouble to Mother. All her efforts to improve them proved an utter failure. Neither age mended the ways of Radhu. As she became old, her obstinacy and quarrelsomeness also increased. But Mother bore patiently all these things to the last. Only when the aberrations of these reached a pitch Mother was heard to say, 'May be, I offered the bel leaves along with their thorns on Shiva's head, and hence there is this thorn by my side'.

Added to these two there were her other brothers and their children, most of whom stayed with Mother. Her brothers were greedy and inconsiderate, and always troubled Mother for money. Once Mother said with great sorrow, 'They are crying themselves hoarse for money only. They never ask for knowledge and devotion even by accident'.

Apart from these relatives, the devotees who came to her did not give less troubles. Once Sri Ramakrishna had told her that the people of Calcutta were living just like worms and it was her duty to look after their welfare. This the Mother performed to its letters. Whereas the Master used to test hard before he accepted one as his disciple, Mother accepted all, whoever came to her. Just like the great Lord Shiva who accepted the poison to save the worlds, she too took the poison of all seeing only their welfare. In fact, to impart spiritual instruction is not any easy task. The true guru is a saviour, who through his unbounded love accepts the entire responsibility of his disciple. Not only this, often enough he transfers to himself the disciple's sins and physical maladies and suffers vicariously.

The Mother suffered greatly and she was also aware of the cause of the suffering and yet for the welfare of the devotees she continued to bless them without wincing. Once a devotee said, 'Mother it is said that you have got rheumatism because of your acceptance of the devotee's sins. I have an earnest prayer to make — don't you suffer for my sake, ordain it so that I myself may suffer the consequences of my own work'. The Mother replied quickly, 'How can that be so, my boy, how can that be so? You keep well and let me suffer.'

As she used to accept disciples without any discrimination, not all of them who came to her had real and earnest spiritual hankering. Mother herself used to say that many of her disciples were just like the milk in which one seer of milk is added to three to four seers of water. As Mother had taken the responsibility of their spiritual welfare she had to do japa for their sake. During her last illness, when she was not sleeping well in the nights, the attendants used to request her to sleep, then the Mother would reply, 'What can I do, my son? The boys come and entreat me eagerly, and take the mantra and go home. But nobody does any japa regularly. Some don't do it even once. Yet as I have shouldered the burden, should I not look after them? That is why I do japa and pray to the Master'.

If we go on to study the troubles and tribulations that Mother suffered, indeed there is no end of it. But the real importance lies not in how much she suffered, but how and why she suffered all these. Amidst dire poverty and severe criticism, not for a single moment did she complain, not for a second did she grumble. The relatives gave bitter troubles, the devotees pained her both mentally as well as physically, but never a single

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word of admonishment did escape her lips. Instead she poured out in abundance love and blessings to one and all equally.

Mother suffered almost all the sorrows that came usually to all ordinary women. Widowhood, poverty, criticism from people and relatives — most of these she actually imposed on her. Why? Because it is to serve this purpose she had come, to show the way not to a selected few, but to one and all, particularly to the common people. That is why she suffered all the sorrows of the woman and showed the way how being amidst sorrows, to go beyond them. In modern times due to growing spirit of individualism among women, the peace and joy of home is becoming almost a rare thing. Sri Sarada Devi, the manifestation of the Divine Power in this age, proclaims through her life that it is through love, forbearance and broadmindedness alone the joy and peace of the home can be established. If every home becomes peaceful and happy, the peace and happiness of the country will not be far off. May the Divine Power which came down in this age as Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi bless us and guide our understanding on the right path.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REBIRTH IN ANCIENT INDIAN THOUGHT

VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

Introduction

Self-perpetuation and self-prolongation appeal to men with irresistible force. Man laments nothing so much as his annihilation. Rebirth is an answer to this dominant quest for ever-renewed existence. The doctrine of rebirth has a prominent place in the ancient systems of Indian thought.[1] The Vedantic and Buddhist systems adhere to it in some form or other. Perhaps this notion of rebirth is the sole important distinguishing feature of Hinduism from the Semitic religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The doctrine of rebirth has been interpreted in two ways. In the most popular form it means that man is a spiritual monadic soul and after the disintegration of his body he would assume another form. He may assume either a human form again or may be compelled to assume even an animal form. Secondly this doctrine of rebirth has sometimes meant birth in some super-terrestrial region. According to the Hindu popular tradition there are other regions besides this earth where there are created beings. Hence it is possible that the soul may assume some physical form or other in some super-terrestrial regions. In both these forms of this doctrine the common point is the acceptance of the continuity of the existence of the soul.

The doctrine of rebirth is an answer to the persistent and fond desire of man for self-perpetuity. Sometimes the desire for self-preservation seeks satisfaction in continuation of oneself, through one's progeny. But that alone would not satisfy a man. The egoistic propensity of man loves to relish the prospects of endless continuity through numerous births. Even in some countries and civilizations, outside India this doctrine of rebirth has been upheld. Pythagoras was an ardent believer in transmigration of souls[2] and it is reported that once in the barking of a dog he discovered the agonizing cries of his dead friend. Plato accepted the notion of the previous existence of souls. He adopts the theory of 'recollection' by the soul of its previous existences. Bruno in the Middle Ages accepted

[1] For the classic statement of the doctrine of rebirth see the *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 23 and XV, 8-10.

[2] Cf. Sri Aurobindo, *The Problem of Rebirth* (Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry, 1952), p. 8.

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this notion. The German poet Goethe although greatly inclined towards science loved to play with the idea of metempsychosis.

In modern times it is difficult to believe in a notion which demands so much of credulity on our part.[3] Even if one is not an atheist or a materialist, still he finds it difficult to believe in the concrete perpetuation of a monadic supra-atomic spiritual substance through endless births and deaths. The scientific procedures of observation, quantification, mensuration and controlled experimentation do not have the least chance of application in this realm. One has either to believe in this doctrine or to reject it. There can be no objective and dispassionate argumentation about it. There may be, however, something to be said for this doctrine in finding some plausible explanation of the phenomenon of genius. The exceptional intellectual achievement of the great geniuses cannot be explained only by the threefold factors of heredity, environment and nurture. Geniuses appear as freaks, as deviations from the normal course of human achievements. The theory of rebirth comes as a handy explanation of this phenomenon. Hence it is not possible to dismiss this theory as entirely fantastic. It may have some meaning and relevance in a region which is beyond the cognizance of human faculties. For those who believe in a non-mechanical universe the doctrine of rebirth has provided strengthened energy to face the trials of this life.

History of the Doctrine of Rebirth in India

On anthropological evidence it has been held that the tribal population of India holds to the notion of continuity of the dead person in some form or other. It is possible that even in the third millenia B.C. the ancestors of these tribal people believed in some such notions. It is not far-fetched to hold that the universally prevalent belief in ghosts is a part of the tribal belief in some kind of continuity of the departed ancestors. The acceptance of several kinds of genii is also a part of that same tradition. This primitive belief in the persistence of the ancestors is partly responsible for the later evolution of the doctrine of rebirth.

We do not have any evidence about the beliefs and conceptions of the Mohenjodaro people regarding metempsychosis. It is possible to hold that the crude notions regarding the continuity of the soul after death may be a part of a widely prevalent tradition in which the aboriginal remote ancestors of the modern Indian tribes as well as the people who built the foundations of the civilization at Harappa and Mohenjodaro might have shared. The Atharvaveda may partly contain the remnants of the beliefs and notions of the aboriginal tribes.

European Indologists hold that in the Vedas there is no conception of rebirth of the soul upon earth.[4] After death, according to the Vedic poets and bards, the souls are supposed to have residence in the world of Yama. But Swami Dayananda holds that in the Vedas the doctrine of transmigration is present. In one of the hymns of the Rigveda there is a prayer for the acquisition of sense-organs, the body — the *tanva* and the animating spirit or the *asu*. In the Yajurveda there is a prayer for the re-acquisition of *atma*.[5] In the Atharvaveda also there is a similar prayer.[6] The word *atman* in the Vedic samhitas, however, is interpreted as referring only to the animus. It is not a reference to the spiritual soul substance of the later metaphysical Vedanta. Originally the word *atma* meant the animating principle. It signified the breath. It is an indication of the great significance of air or breath in ancient thought. The basic root in both the words *atma* and *prana* is the same *√at* or *√an*.

Towards the end of the Vedic period some

[3] For a contemporary formulation of the concept of rebirth see Sri Aurobindo, *The Riddle of This World* (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, 1951, fourth edition), pp. 83-86.

[4] A. B. Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 33.

[5] *Y. V.* IV, 15 : '*punaratma ma agan*'.

[6] *A. V.* VII, 6, 67, 1 : '*punaratma*'.

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of the seers accepted the notion of an indeterminate absolute immanental power. During the Vedic age it will be far-fetched to seek the roots of the conception of a spiritual soul-substance attaining identity with this primal infinite power.

The germs of the concept of transmigration of the soul appear in the Brahmanas.[7] The priests of those days adhered to the concept that through good works birth in a good family could be obtained.[8]

In the Upanishadic age three conceptions of the destiny of the soul were present. (i) At a philosophical plane the soul was supposed to gain identity with the absolute through deep meditation and intuitive consciousness. (ii) It was also held that through good works, specially sacrificial rituals, the soul could attain heaven. (iii) The souls of the dead persons were supposed to attain birth in human or animal bodies according to their actions. This rebirth could be attained either immediately after death or after some period of residence either in heaven or hell in accordance with the merits and demerits acquired and the soul could assume a human or an animal form.

In the *Katha Upanishad* there is a clear statement regarding the belief in the transmigration of the soul. Rebirth is determined by one's intellectual and moral attainment यथाकर्म यथाश्रुतम्. It is stated that a person of debased character would be reduced even to an existence in the trees or other inorganic substances. This conception of the attainment of the status of trees (*sthanu*) may appear very crude but in one sense it is a testimony to the concrete unity of all existence.[9]

The essence of the Upanishadic concept of rebirth is the stress on the determination of character and personality not merely in the mechanical terms of heredity and environment but by the impact of the concentrated essence and potency of the actions performed in previous lives. This element of Upanishadic thought has also been accepted by Buddhism. In the Jatakas it is elaborately laid down that Buddha had to undergo almost unbearable rigors of penances in previous existences before he could attain the exalted heights of Buddhahood.

Buddhism accepts the concept of rebirth. But there are two momentous differences between the Upanishadic and the Buddhistic theories. The first theoretical difference proceeds from the rejection by Buddhism of the monadic and substantialistic view of the human soul. It may appear ridiculous at first sight to uphold the notion of rebirth without the acceptance of any transmigrating spiritual entity. According to Buddhism there is the rebirth of personality or of the psycho-physical complex — the *namarupa skandha*. In the *Milinda Panho* the notion of the rebirth of the *namarupa skandha* has been illustrated with numerous examples. They are, however, not proofs but analogies. For illustrating the notion of rebirth without transmigration the *Milinda* gives the analogies of (i) the lighting of one lamp from another and (ii) the transmission of verses from the teacher to the disciple. The acceptance by Buddhism of the concept of rebirth even after the repudiation of the spiritual substantialistic view of the soul is a testimony to the enormous power of persistent notions which have been accepted in the cultural tradition. The sway of the concept of rebirth must here have been overwhelming over the national mind of northern India in those days to compel its acceptance by Buddhism in some modified form.

A second important difference between the Upanishadic and the Buddhistic theories of rebirth lies in the rejection by the latter of the possibility of lapse from the human status to birth in the trees. This seems to be an advance

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[7] The *Satapatha Brahmana* 1, 5, 3, 4, contains a dubious allusion to the concept of transmigration.

[8] For references to the concept of *punarjanma* in Yaska's *Nirukta*, see E. J. Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 11.

[9] But the peculiarity of the ancient Hindu philosophy of rebirth which distinguishes it from the Hegelian one, is the possibility of descent from a higher scale of life to the lower, and this indicates the great importance attached in Hindu thought to moral causation and the power of human efforts.

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in the evolution of thought. It means that the immense qualitative difference between the human personality and the trees must have been recognized. So great is the difference between a man and a tree that in spite of terrific moral misbehaviour the possibility of birth in the trees has been ruled out by Buddhism. But in consonance with the Upanishadic tradition Buddha does seriously uphold the possibility of birth among the animals. According to the Jatakas he himself had previous births among the animals before he became ready for his incarnation as Buddha.[10]

Sociological Analysis of the Concept of Rebirth

According to the advocates of the theory of historical materialism the concept of rebirth was generated and popularized by the ideological supporters of the interests of the ruling and propertied sections. The latter popularized this notion in order to provide spiritual and moral rationalization of the social and economic disproportionalities in society. The concept of rebirth is thus supposed to have put a moral meaning into the existing fact of social tyranny and exploitation. It is supposed to make the people reconciled to their fate because even the greatest evils which could be checked by social action become rationalized as divinely ordained sanctions for demerits and evil actions performed in past existences.

I do not agree with this sociological explanation. What ground is there for imputing base and sordid motives to the exponents of the theory of rebirth? This explanation assumes the existence of the counterpart of modern idological writers and advocates in very ancient times.

I uphold an anthropological and a philosophical approach to this problem of the origin of the concept of rebirth. From the anthropological standpoint it seems that to hold that the dead relation continues in some form is a part of the psychological aspiration of the people. The tribe was regarded so important in those days that even after death the dead person was regarded as in some ways connected with the life of the tribe either in the form of a ghost or a prophylactic ancestor. The idea of transmigration of the soul is a refinement of this crude notion.

Besides anthropological roots, the idea of the transmigration of the soul or rebirth has a philosophical origin. It is related to speculations regarding the conservation of the merits acquired and the penalization of the evil deeds committed. An elementary notion of rectificatory justice demands that the good and evil of this world should be properly dealt with.[11] This is the *prospective* conception of justice. The human mind, further seeks some kind of explanation for the disparities, contradictions and incongruities prevalent in the world. To explain the anomalies of the present day world the concept of rebirth appears as a ready moral instrument. This is the *retrospective* conception of justice. The philosophy of rebirth is thus built on this twofold foundations of prospective and retrospective justice. Thus the theory of rebirth is related to philosophical reflections on the nature of moral action. Thus I think that although the elementary germs of the concept of rebirth may be found in the ideas of the prolongation of the life of the departed soul among the primitive tribes, the final philosophical explanation given to it is the work of moral philosophers who speculated on the moral destiny of man.

Rebirth and Moral and Spiritual Individualism

In the earliest periods of civilization the tribe or the clan or the sile (German *sippe*) was the primary unit. The idea of distinct specific separate individuality was not yet born.

[10] This implies that the ancient Indian thinkers would be opposed to the concept of pure human evolutionary progression. They upheld the view that if a man took recourse to the path of evil and untruth there could be retrogression and he would have to take birth among the animals. Thus in ancient Indian philosophy there is the acceptance both of evolution and retrogression. This is in contrast to the sentimental optimism of the Hegelians and the spokesman of materialistic science.

[11] According to the Vedic belief, life and joy after death were regarded as the reward of virtue. See E. W. Hopkins, *Hindu Ethics*, p. 42.

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The individual sought significance in the preservation of the clan. The formulation and acceptance of the notion of rebirth is a revolutionary inroad upon the cohesiveness of the group. In place of seeking the roots of individual action in the compulsive norms and commands of the group, the theory of rebirth proclaims an unusually prominent notion of individuality. It proclaims that each soul monad inhabiting a physical body is a distinct person with a prolonged history in time. It teaches the conservation of accumulated experiences. It proclaims that the centre of gravity of individual life is to be found in one's own self. Thus just as the emergence of the concept of 'Daemon' in Socratic philosophy has been the precursor of a theory of individualism in Greece so also the concept of rebirth was the proclamation of the notion of spiritual and moral individuality in India. Its emergence in one sense symbolizes the break of the old tribal community. The old tribal community had been exposed to the corrosive attacks of social stratification by the solidification of the caste endogamy. The caste system was a social-institutional attack on the primitive community and sundered its old organic bonds. The concept of rebirth was a significant philosophical attack on the cohesiveness of the primitive community because it introduced the principle of distinct continuing separate individuality. It definitely asserted that the individual is not lost in the group. His spiritual existence transcends the confines of the group. Thus the doctrine of rebirth has a very great importance in the history of Indian thought and even in modern India, outstanding thinkers and personalities like Dayananda, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi have adhered to this belief.[12]

[12] The leaders of the Brahmo Samaj like Ram Mohan Roy and Devendranath Thakur have been sceptical about this doctrine.

TOTAKA

(a disciple of Sankarācārya)

B. H. KAPADIA

As regards the personal history, life, etc. of Totaka we know next to nothing. It is not a matter for distrust or doubt that Totaka and Hastāmalaka[1] cannot have been the disciples of Sankarācārya. The two names are not mere abstractions. Hastāmalaka-slokāh is a work of Hastāmalaka. It can either mean the verses of Hastāmalaka or verses which are so clear as an āmalaka placed on the hand. It is rather probable, that the latter meaning is more original one and then, in consequence, legendary phantasy drew out from the compound the name of an author viz., Hastāmalaka. Similar is the case with Totaka, who is also named as Trotaka. His poem is couched in Totaka-metre. He is therefore a Totakācārya in the sense, one who is a past-master in writing in anaestical verses. From this circumstance, later on, again wild phantasy abstracted the name Totaka.

The legends, that inform so much that is improbable, are narrated in Sankaradigvijaya composed five hundred years after Sankara. They are of no advantage to us. For the time being we can depend on ancient texts. Since we ought to satisfy thereby that the tradition which knows about Totaka and Hastāmalaka as disciples of the great Sankarācārya cannot be confirmed by works ascribed to them. If however, we do not lay great emphasis on the genuineness of the names Hastāmalaka and Totaka then we ought to set aside the legends to which tradition lends support that the authors of Hastāmalaka-

[1] According to Sankaradigvijaya a deaf son of Prabhakara.

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verses and Totaka-verses are direct disciples of Sankara. Since, the doctrines advocated by them stand immediately near to the thoughts of Sankara and they are wanting in characteristic marks of later Advaita. From these grounds, it is justified and suggested, that the two poems are not to be passed over in a representation of the doctrines of disciples of Sankara and to place the two disciples by the side of the two important authors Suresvara and Padmapāda, whose thoughts are almost the reflection of the teachings of the Master.

Srutisārasamuddharana (i.e. drawing out the kernel from the revelation) is a work of Totaka. The work is so named by the author in V. 175. The work consists of 179 verses out of which 176 are composed in totaka-metre. Other metres are employed for the mangala-verse at the beginning and for the concluding verses.

This work is referred to in Madhava's Sankaradigvijaya XII 79 ff and as the editor observes in his introduction (pp. 3-4), the Advaitarājyalakshmi, the so named commentary on XXI.85 of Sankaradigvijaya explains the adjective laghu characterising the text of Totaka by pancaslokātmaka, and accordingly S'r. would consist of only five verses. But, another commentary, entitled Dindima, on Sankaradigvijaya quotes five (in another MS. seven) verses from S'r (4-8 especially 2-8) and designated this expressly as the beginning (ādi) of the work. Both the commentaries are dated in the concluding verses and gives the date 1798 A.D. for Dindima and 1805 A.D. for Advaitarājyalakshmi. Thus, Dindima is an ancient one, the other could have made use of it and thereby may have neglected the Ādi. Thus, the usage pancaslokātmaka of Advaitarājyalakshmi has not raised any suspicion with regard to the genuineness of the remaining 174 verses.

The commentary, Tattvadipikā of Saccidānanda Yogindra added to this text, originates at a time that is quite indeterminate. It contains all real (genuine) discussions, explains the basic text in a perfectly clear and exhaustive manner without at the same time becoming verbose.

Besides S'r. another work, a poem composed in eight totaka verses is attributed to Totaka. It contains an obeisance to Sankara and expresses a request to allow him to put in black and white the teachings. The name of this work is Sankaradesikāshtaka.

A few characteristics, which can be straightway characterised as of Sankara and which differentiate him from other Advaitins are reflected in Srutisārasamuddharana. Totaka neither speaks yet about Vivarta of Brahman but speaks about Vikritis of the highest which is the Prakriti (S'r. 126), just like Sankara who not yet differentiates terminologically between parināma or vikāra and vivarta. The Avidyā even is not for Totaka the material cause but exactly in the sense of Sankara is only the primeval cause of Samsāra (Samsriti-hetu S'r. 76). A theory about Avidyā especially about its Āsraya and Vishaya is wanting in S'r. The doctrine about the Ānanda-character of Brahman is passed over. Gunas are attributed[2] to Brahman (Sat). The expressions paramātman and paramesvara are employed as absolute synonyms (S'r. 67, 69). S'r. can itself be a work of Sankara if the simplicity of thought pattern and a few other characteristics do not speak against it. The dependence of Totaka on his Teacher appears even of greater importance if besides S. Bh. still other works attributed to him are genuine. The last but one stanza of S'r., as the editor of the work has proved in the introduction pp. 2-3, is rather clearly an imitation of the last stanza of the concluding mangala of Māndukyabhāshya ascribed to Sankara. Above all, an intimate relation exists with Upadesasāhasri. The form of S'r. is modelled after the Gadyaprabandha of Upadesasāhasri. Both the texts are doctrinal discussions between the teacher and the taught. The Gadyaprabandha especially in its second Prakarana is a real dialogue, whereas the dialogue-form with Totaka merely remains a dead pattern. The structure

[2] S'r. 75.

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of S'r. is indeed different from both the doctrinal-dialogues of Upadesasāhasri. However, innumerable isolated thoughts of Totaka are borrowed[3] from there.

The work therefore makes an impression of an inexperienced person. In this respect, the 175th verse is of special interest. It is said there, '*Guru-sishya-Kathā-Sravanena mayā Srutivac-chruti-sāra-samuddharanam kritam..*' The commentary explains this in a manner that is not satisfactory. Therefore, it needs to be explained in a different manner. The stanza in any case has been explained by others, then this comprehension could be the cause of that which somewhat deviates from Madhava's Sankaradigvijaya (xii. 70 ff) and has been the cause of the legend narrated in the introduction of the textual edition of Kevalānanda.

According to it, Totaka, who was addressed with his proper name as Giri, was a baṭu, who served Sankara, did not participate in the doctrinal conversation but remained with him as a dumb listener. Once upon a time, according to the legend, he, reverentially requested Sankara at the beginning of the doctrinal discussion in eight totaka-verses for instruction. The verses are preserved. They form the Sankaradesikāshtaka. Thereupon, Giri had secured permission from the master to participate as a disciple during the discourse of Brahmasutrabhāshya and towards the end of the hour of instruction Sankara demanded of him to bring together what he has learnt till now, on which, Giri at once brought out Srutisārasamudharana in totaka-metre. This brought him the name Totaka. Accordingly, Totaka had really become acquainted with the Vedanta philosophy through listening to the discourse between the teacher and the taught.

This account tallies with the inexperienced character of S'r., tallies with stanza 175 of the treatise and with Sankaradesikāshtaka. The last mentioned poem contains no reference to a definite situation but with its refrain, 'O master Sankara! may you be my shelter (*bhava Sankaradesika, me saranam*) and his request repeated always in newer forms in order to introduce him in the doctrine of the Secret, is explainable from reasons which might have been similar to the one reported by the legend. It should not be asserted from this that the legend concerns with direct tradition but it has even a few data which are not available to us even from S'r. and from Sankaradesikāshtaka, and if brought in a context which one does see from a conclusive manner, then it appears to be justly plausible.

From the little, what we gather from S'r. about Sankara, it may be mentioned, that Totaka, as well as Suresvara and Padmapāda, in Guru-namaskāra (S'r. 178) bring to prominence the large number of pupils who followed their master.

The originality of S'r. is not so great and with respect to it Totaka has played no role in the history of Vedanta. Of somewhat independent worth are perhaps only the peculiar impressions of the doctrine of Ahamkāra and the illusionistic Satkaryavāda which Totaka has worked out, shortly and clearly yet without utilizing the conception of Vivarta in the discussion with the Sāmkhya.

But, from this, his own accomplishment, the small work has yet a certain worth for the investigation of the ancient Advaita. It is not without interest, that we have before us in him, the report of a contemporary, about certain doctrines of Sankara and this report is in contrast to the account of Suresvara who immediately after Totaka is most closely associated with Sankara. This report is perhaps a reflection of a factual course of teaching to which he is introduced. The report is composed in appropriate clear terms. This suits, again in contrast to Suresvara, especially about the doctrine of Ahamkāra.

The greatest significance of the poem however, should lie for the historian in the fundamental knowledge which yields for the solution of the question concerned with the authorship closely joined with the name of Sankara.

[3] Sr. 8 and 10 occur in उपदेशसाहस्री गद्य II. 75; Sr. 42 and उप. गद्य I. 23; Sr. and उप. पद्य xviii. 100; Sr. 44 and S Bh. II. 1. 33; IV. 3. 14. Many ideas agree with Suresvara's Naiskarmyasiddhi.

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Totaka, who is completely dependent on the thoughts of his master, adopts even such peculiarities of the doctrine of Sankara which are wanting in all other Advaitins. In spite of this, however, S'r. cannot have been composed by Sankara. At least three phenomena speak against this. First, Totaka accepted in the system the conception of the three Gunas as thought by the Sānkhya (S'r. 108). This is not done by Sankara. Secondly, at the beginning and towards the end he invokes in the mangala Vishnu as an Ishta devatā. Even this is not the practice of Sankara. Thirdly, Totaka often employs the word sphurana unfamiliar to Sankara (S'r. III. 112) somewhat in the sense of abhivyakti. This word is foreign to Sankara. These are indeed not many deviations; still these three characteristics are already sufficient to raise at least the doubt regarding the authorship of Sankara. Advaita texts, which exhibit characteristics like the three that are already mentioned before, ought to contain even other signs to show that it is not composed by Sankara. It is therefore, possible to prove even for a text (if this is not too short), composed by a just independent thinker, which is exactly in the line of Sankara's trend of presentation, that it does not originate from Sankara. This is an important result of the investigation of S'r. It is possible, when giving judgement regarding the question of validity of the result that it may have come from either Sankara or from his immediate next disciples.

From the three characteristics, the first and the second characterise the author of S'r. as more popular in comparison with Sankara. The three Gunas were extraordinarily popular. Sankarācārya who limited or narrowed down Vedanta from other systems avoided it and every doctrine solely belonging to the Sānkhya. Further, it was generally usual among the Vedantins to pay homage to the favourite deity at the beginning of a literary undertaking. Sankara followed this practice very seldom and when he did so, then he expressed his respects to the pure Brahman. The third characteristic, however, contains personal use of the language. For the time being, we do not know as to why Sankara avoided the word so much loved by others, particularly later Advaitins.

Before I close this article, I owe a duty to express my sincerest obligation and thanks to Dr Paul Hacker, the author of 'Die Schuter Sankaras' for having made use of his ideas, thoughts and arguments in the course of this article.

ANGUISH AND THE SENSE OF THE SACRED

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

Three powerful forces drive us onward in life — desire, call it sensual desire, pain (suffering) and time. Desire pushes us to its accomplishment, and pain makes us struggle to avoid it. Time in one of its roles serves as the channel for desire and pain to achieve their respective ends of having and of avoiding. Time in a second role gives us the presentiment of the end of time, death, and thus makes life intense and dear to be lived. This second role of time makes me say that desire, suffering and time are not simply driving forces, but factors that give dynamism to life.

Time has a dynamism that extends up to the end of time and brings this end to be felt in time. Life's time has a dynamism that touches its end, death, and this end is felt while living. Desire has a dynamism that touches the end of desire and makes this end felt in the midst of desire. Neither the end of life, nor the end of desire is felt as isolated states. In that case, life's dynamism stops. They are felt as 'poles' and life's dynamism overflowing its limits. This is true of suffering too. Suffering knows its end and feels it in its own centre. Otherwise, we can never be

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conscious of suffering, as we are when we come out of it and say that we can face with better courage, if it comes upon us again.

If life has a dynamism that extends up to the end of life and makes this end felt while living, and if desire has a dynamism that makes its end felt in the heart of desire, then why are we anguished when we think of death, or when we think of suffering. The reason is that when we think of death, we do not think of it as the dynamism of life that goes and touches it and brings it back to be felt as a state of consciousness. We think of death as a cessation of everything, as annihilation of everything and this produces anguish. We cut life into two, life and death — a separation so untrue to life's dynamism — and death as an isolated event unconnected with life, as a dead state, frightens us, anguishes us. The dynamism of life that extends to death is the dynamism of consciousness. We live in and by that dynamism. What right have we to cut the branch of the tree on which we are seated, unless it is by profound foolishness. Still, we cut it, we cut consciousness into two, into life and death, and on seeing death's face we are anguished, death as separated from life.

Life, if I am to use L with capital is more than life and death. For Life is consciousness. Life is Love. Life is more than the time and the timeless, more than desire and suffering. How can we cut it up and see it isolated as death and suffering, without destroying its pristine dynamism, consciousness. It is this destruction of dynamism that brings about anguish.

To see life as a whole is to see it as sacred. That which is whole, that which is total, is sacred. The tendency to bring anguish by cutting life and consciousness into two is innate in us. But stronger than this tendency is the primordial fact of the undivided and total consciousness which, though open to human action is not essentially affected by it. Herein lies the sacrosanct character of consciousness. Though open to human action, it is untouched by it, as it has a deep inner core that is too sacred and too deep to be touched. When we stand before the sacredness of consciousness which is untouched by anguish, because it is not cut up into fragments, when we stand before the sacredness of will that resides in our hearts as Divine Will, when we stand before life that is Sacred, then the tendency to be anguished disappears. We are made holy.

From what has been said above, it follows that the sacred or holy we are going to speak of is not a condition induced by an atmosphere or a given created value, not simply the sense of sacred which we get in a church or temple or before a holy man. What I mean is the primordial awareness of holiness that has its centre in us and which conquers, integrates and annexes our surroundings, the whole of manifestation to itself. Sacredness convinces, it conquers. It conquers by its sweetness. There is no spiritual conquest possible without awareness. Awareness always captivates.

The sacred of which we are going to speak is beyond the good and the rational; it is an interiority that is perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to another. Like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined and hence above the rational. One must be guided and led on by consideration and reflection of sacredness through the paths of his mind and genius until the overplus of the feeling of the sacred begins to stir one's mind and overwhelm him and we stand aside in wonderment and awe.

We cannot create it, we can only be aware of it. This awareness of the sacred does not depend on anything, for it is Being. It may be said that in that case what is spoken of is being and not the sacred. Our reply is that we want to push the sacred to such limits that it ceases to be sacred. When God becomes our innermost reality, He is no more sacred to us. He becomes the beat of our hearts and the breath of our lives. He is no more sacred as a given value. He is sacred as awareness. God is not sacred to himself.

Let us hear the charming words of Meister

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Eckhart which ring like the words of Sankara : 'Think not to lay the foundations of thy holiness upon doing, but rather upon being. For works do not sanctify us, but we should sanctify the works. Whoever is not great in his essential being, will achieve nothing by works, whatever he may do.' So then, the accent is on the being in us which bestows sanctity on things and thoughts, not so much on being sacred but on the Being that is sacred which covers all ways of integration with it as also all manners of its manifestation. In ordinary language sacred is the potency of the Divine. We want to go much further and affirm it as Being.

Is there a sacredness other than the awareness of the sacred ? Is there an existence other than the awareness of existence ? And this awareness of the sacred is in the heart even as the awareness of existence is in the heart. To exist as it exists in the heart is to contemplate on it, is to contemplate on our primal sacredness. For awareness is sacred, awareness in totality. We are not conscious of our sacredness for we subject sacredness to a thinking process and this process separates existence from awareness. During the moment of awareness, of unity, even those who are not aware of their existence, animals and trees, are felt in the depths of our being. For the moment of awareness is a non-dual experience. By that moment we give being to those who are not conscious of it ; we give being to the world and make it sacred.

The sacred man unconsciously fulfils the function of making others sacred. It is the moment of awareness, of unity-consciousness in him that fulfils this function. For us there is a duality and a function of making others sacred. For him there is nothing except awareness.

When we stand before God who is Being, we feel we are united to his sacredness. We feel we are more than we know of ourselves. We feel we are transcending ourselves. The real test of the sacred-feeling is self-transcendence, is spiritual delight. Man is more than what he knows of himself and it is this self-transcending quality that serves as the raw material for the awareness of the sacred. For sacredness gives us the certitude of moving up. Man alone of all creation refuses to be what he is ; for he alone is afraid of his grandeur. This refusal to being what he is, this fear of grandeur compels him to self-transcendence and makes his self-transcendence lucid. For where there is a conscious clogging of transcendence there is lucidity.

It is this lucidity that bestows sacredness on all our efforts. Usually we say that sacredness is present in a living form in all religions, that no religion would be worthy of the name without it. It is the lucidity that man gets in consciously stagnating his transcendence that gives sacredness to religions. Before God, another sacred value man feels his transcendence clogged ; God aids man to see himself clearly within himself. God aids man in his lucidity.

All the words used by various religions to denote the sacred signify lucidity, transparence : In Hebrew : gâdosh, in Greek : aylos means crystaline transparence ; in Latin sanctus — more accurately sacer — sacrifice — which again means the absorption by transparence of a smaller reality by a greater reality.

This idea of the sacred signifying lucidity, transparence, is capital in Vedanta — conveyed through the two conceptions of Siva and punya. Siva stands for the white radiance as also the God Siva who is always represented by a crystal flame that goes up. Punya — that which saves, in the sense of transcendence. The upanishads declare that Reality is Shantam, Sivam, Sundaram. Shantam : silence or peace, Sivam : transparently clear like knowledge, and Sundaram : beautiful.

If we know that we are more than what we know of ourselves, then are we not surprised at ourselves ? But the tragedy of life is that man is not surprised at himself, at his essence. 'Life is a short death, unless we are by life surprised' says Sri Aurobindo. If we are not surprised by life, by life's Reality that always escapes our comprehension and thus

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pushes us up in the ladder of sacred evolution, that evades us and intrigues us by its irrationality, then we are anguished. We cannot stand before Reality without a reaction. If we are surprised which means that we are held by the self-transcending principle, the 'I' in us, then we evolve accordingly. When we are anguished if we put the question to us 'who is it that is anguished in me', 'who am I', we know the anguish vanishes immediately.

In a sense integration with reality means anguish. When we stand before reality our ego melts, gets attenuated and this melting ego gives us anguish. We feel the sands washed from under our feet. So then anguish seems the law of all spiritual growth, of all growth.

But then the question is: 'In growth, are we to be conscious of our melting egos or are we to be conscious of the sun of Reality that makes the ego melt?'

Herein is the difference between certain schools of existentialist thought and Vedanta. Some schools of existentialism which say that anguish is the law of existence no doubt touch on the fundamental fact of life, life standing before reality and feeling its sands being washed from under its feet. But they put the accent on the ego that feels the anguish and not on the evolving consciousness that leaves behind the ego-sense and integrates more and more with Reality. Vedanta does the opposite. Vedanta puts the accent on the felicity-aspect of reality with which we integrate by and by and not on the ego in anguish. How can there be evolution so far as we think of ego and its anguish. The question is different if we want to make anguish a part of our lives, a spur for our endeavours. Here also Vedanta does the opposite. Felicity is the spur in life for Vedanta. For having tasted a little of it through earthly pleasures, we are spurred on to a longer draft, untarnished by sophistication.

We said that we are surprised or we should be surprised at ourselves because of the self-transcending essence in us. It is this quality of surprise that makes felicity an inexhaustible quality of our lives. Surprise or wonderment is not surprise at something but surprise at ourselves and hence surprise in itself. I wish to link this quality of surprise with sacredness. For an artist who is not at all a believer, the theme of his painting is sacred because it is the source of his aesthetic inspiration, the object of his adoration. When he works on it, it is something sacrosanct, and he cannot tolerate any intrusion, any critique. We are reminded of the lines of Robert Burns the Scotch poet who said that when he is composing his lines, none can stand face to face to him. For a scientist working out his discovery in the laboratory the subject is sacred because it gives him every moment surprise and creativity. His scientific intuition is for him the sacred of sacred.

Let us see the role wonderment plays in the functioning of our personality. According to Vedanta the human individual is a complex of five varying certitudes. It is as though the real self (Atman) is dressed up in five sheaths or envelopes and the sheath nearest to the self is the sheath of bliss (ânanda). When man is identified with this sheath of bliss, he transcends his ego or individuality. The characteristics of this sheath are joy, wonderment, relaxation. All sheaths by themselves inert, are illumined and animated by the self.

First is the physical sheath consisting of blood, flesh and bone which is created and sustained by food. The physicists and chemists have studied man with reference to this sheath. The second sheath is called the vital sheath. The soul makes this sheath an instrument for absorbing the vitality from the cosmos and giving back to nature its contribution and thus making life rhythmic. All that is rhythmic in life and nature is the contribution of this vital segment in man. The third is the mental sheath by virtue of which we question, doubt and create. It is by virtue of the mind that man reserves to himself the right to make an error or a wrong step, knowing it is an error. The fourth is the sheath of the intellect, the power of discrimination and certitude. While

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the mind creates doubts, the sheath of the intellect gives certitude. By virtue of this man cuts across moral and spiritual dilemmas and problems and launches on spiritual pursuits. And lastly Vedanta speaks of the sheath of bliss, the sheath that gives us the quality of self-transcendence. Even this is a sheath and not the self. It is as though all the four sheaths are standing in wonder looking at the sheath of bliss which by its simple presence, not acting, but acting, makes the other sheaths work and constitute the unity that is the human personality. Though it is the self to whom belong these five sheaths, it is the ego who organizes in everyday life the activities of these sheaths. The ego with the background of eternal Being, the self, acts as the centre round which our mental, intellectual and vital activities are organized. The ego is in perpetual movement. Not that it is a flux as in Buddhistic thought. It is in perpetual movement maintaining its continuity of aspiration. It moves up to Being and down to extremes of selfishness and stupidity. And this movement is the proof that it is not the limited entity it takes itself to be; it is the proof of its self-transcendence.

In this up-and-down movement the ego is propelled by a continuity of aspiration. We call this continuity of aspiration memory. The ego is propelled by memory, or makes use of memory. Memory of what? Memory of the search for pleasure and avoidance of pain, memory of the good ends, of the ultimate good according to the lights of the ego. In a sense this memory is cosmic, for the good and bad ends are cosmic and the search for them is far beyond my personal memory. When there is a focalization of this cosmic search in my ego, I feel it as my memory and I am pushed forward by it. So the search for pleasure or bliss is the substance of our memory. One of the capital affirmations of Vedanta is that the sheath of bliss is the memory sheath, is the kârana-sharira, by virtue of which we keep our continuity of aspiration. This continuity of aspiration, call it libido or history or call it the race-unconscious, Vedanta calls it Bliss-unconscious or the cosmic sheath of Bliss. Like the cosmic air or the waters of the ocean it lays itself open to us for a personal choice and focalization. And this focalization acts as the substance of our memory.

The sheath of bliss which is the sheath of memory, the ensemble of our continuity of aspiration is the most sensitive and capital part of our personality. We say that it is the capital part of our personality, because it is by virtue of it that we *dream* of great things, of a great future. And how capital is dreaming. There are countries that are quite content to keep what they have and there are countries who dream and hence are not so much preoccupied with keeping what they have. For instance, France, let it be said to its credit, is a country that dreams. Herein lies its greatness. Its vision stretches into the far future. India is a country that dreams — perhaps I am afraid, a country that dreams too much. For a country like India it is good to be taught that she should dream and at the same time keep her hands on what she has and increase it.

Because the memory-sheath is the vehicle of our aspiration, of our dreaming capacity, it is very sensitive and fragile and any slightest psychological injury or affront breaks its health. We know from our every day experience that a touch of anguish is sufficient to make us clumsy which results from loss of instinctual memory. When anguish strikes us the first thing we lose is our spontaneous reflexes, our primary contact with things. We say we are unskilful at that moment. In short we have lost touch with the usual arteries that canalize happiness and spontaneity.

Anguish cuts our sense of the sacred, for the sacred is our primary contact with things, for sacred is spontaneity and happiness. The classical instance in Indian thought of anguish destroying the primary contact with things is that of Arjuna. He complains to Sri Krishna that he does not see things clearly, that he does not see any good in things, that he does not see his duty, that he is afraid of simple things; in simple terms, he is confused and

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lost. His sheath of bliss is torn to shreds, his sheath of memory is reduced to confusion. And when the teaching of the Gita was over, the first thing he says is that he has got back his memory, he has got back the *primary contact with things and thoughts* and that he is going to act. He has been able to restore to unity his bliss-sheath. He began again to see the good, the sreyas.

The nature of Arjuna's anguish makes us go deeper into it. It resembles the anguish produced by the approach of death, though Arjuna was not afraid of death. Arjuna says to Sri Krishna : 'My limbs droop down and my mouth is dried up. A tremor comes on my body and my hairs stand on end. My bow slips from my hand and my skin is intensely burning. I am unable to stand and my mind is whirling round.' These are precisely the symptoms of a man in the grip of anguish of approaching death. In the case of Arjuna these symptoms were produced by a conflict in the sense of duty. He was confused as to what he should do ; but he was definitely not afraid of death. The mental confusion was the result of his losing contact with himself, with his inner reality and certitude.

So then let us not forget this lesson : When we lose contact with our inner reality, then we fall into anguish and this anguish can manifest itself in a hundred ways. One of these manifestations is the anguish of death. The remedy for the anguish of death is to ask ourselves who it is that is going to die, is to be conscious that that which dies is the fear of death. The remedy is to restore the contact, by making us conscious of what we really are. That was what Sri Krishna did to Arjuna. Sri Krishna told Arjuna who he really was, that he was the Self and not a simple warrior on the battlefield.

Who was responsible for this capital restoration in Arjuna, the re-discovery of certitude ? Sri Krishna in the capacity of the spiritual teacher who gave him back the sense of the sacred, the primary intention of things, the primary harmony and spontaneity, the vision that sees the good. The accent is on seeing the supreme good which Arjuna lacked. It is the spiritual teacher who on creating the spiritual certitude in the disciple, makes him see the supreme good in things, the sacred in things. The essential nature of spiritual certitude is happiness, bliss, protection and these restore to health the sheath of bliss. When the teacher says to the disciple, you are Reality, the Reality in him becomes dynamic again and the first impulsion brings to life the sheath of memory which is nearest to the Self. Arjuna had lost contact with the primary intention of things and he was anguished. Sri Krishna restored it and Arjuna's spiritual being began to breathe once more. He became creative again in the true sense along lines preferred by his evolution.

Thus the sacred comes to restore to us the primary intention of things, for the sacred is their primary intention, their unity and harmony within us. This harmony emerges monolithe in our childhood and is broken or watered down as we progress in life. 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy — Gates of the prison-house close upon the growing boy', says Wordsworth. The loves and hates of our infancy give us nostalgia. Even though grown old with wisdom, we want to commit the errors of our infancy ! As children we *saw* life in its totality as a whole, as adults we see it cut up in parts. And hence this eternal nostalgia is understandable.

While I was a child I saw one face and was attracted by it. I never saw it again and all my life I have been searching to see it again. All the 'beautiful' faces I saw since my infancy were beautiful because of this search, because of the total vision of beauty I had. I tasted one delicious thing in childhood and all the tasteful things were so because of the search for that primordial contact, that vision. That vision is in myself — I cannot see it, for I cannot objectify it. All errors of judgment, and of emotion in my life are condoned and rectified for I was in search for that primordial contact and I was doing it by a method of trial and error.

A child sees life as a whole ; its intuition

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is not broken by exigencies of empirical life. Duality has not begun its history in child's life and so the profane and the sophisticated have not put their feet in. For the child everything is sacred. I have seen children without any religious education collecting stones of good formation, or conch-shells and keeping them in a sanctuary, as though they were 'holy objects'. They do not allow others to touch them and behave before them as a priest would behave before a sanctuary. Mind you, these children have no idea of ceremonial purity and it is striking that they behave like priests steeped in ceremonial purity with regard to those objects preferred by their unconscious sacred conscience. However, the peak of this original primordial sacred sense in children is marked in the case of a small girl who when questioned what is the most sacred thing in life replied 'coffee with milk'. The most ordinary things spring to sacredness for them, as their primary contact with manifestation and their own inner being is still untarnished by the habits and usages of a mundane existence.

In other words the sacred human spirit is in its full force in the child. How true it is the child is the father of man. It is this consciousness that bifurcates into million faces later on, as history, as civilization, as science. The sense of the sacred is an openness to the eternal deathless human spirit, that soars and while soaring sings. By the human spirit I mean that eternal dynamism of the human heart that moves between belief and unbelief and conquers unbelief and even suicide-mania as we see in the heroes of Dostoiewsky. I mean also the robust optimism and the faith in the immortality of love that are in the words of the son of Anna Karenine, of Tolstoy. When the boy is told that his mother is dead which in fact is not true, the boy replies: 'She loved me so so much; she cannot die.' Civilizations, science and political ideologies have swept over the face of this earth, changing and sometimes defacing its face and contours. But in its deepest aspirations and hunger the human spirit remains the same. This it could not be, if its contact with the All is broken. This gives us faith that in spite of defacements the human spirit is unconquerable. Herein sacredness rests — in this faith.

It is the same faith in sacredness that makes us look with nostalgic eyes, to our infancy, or rather to the eternal infancy, for there we find that unity-awareness, that primary contact with things and their intention. When we look with open eyes to our infancy, we see the birth, age and death of civilizations pass rapidly before our eyes like a film. For all history is a moment in that look. Our look to infancy is the look of God to manifestation and God must look to nourish it. It is a look without winking, for if God winks the world stops.

CALL OF GRACE

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

Someone calls me from a far beyond —
A heliotropic pull from spheres unknown;
An enticement grips me in its tender bond
To lift my whole to its exclusive zone.

Vibrations sweet towards my being float,
My desolate atmosphere is charged with love,
A solemn intimacy, divine, remote
Purges aeonic defilements of my grove.

Loosely and dumb I give way, a helpless tool
Unto its serenity of soft embrace,
Angelic touch of the clasp invisible
Messages me the eternal call of Grace.

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SARA OF VEDANTASARA

*(A synopsis of Vedantasara for easy recapitulation of the Text)**

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

We are happy to be able to present our readers with the synopsis of *Vedantasara,* one of the most authoritative treatises on non-dualistic Vedanta, prepared for students at a seminar held by Swami Nikhilananda, of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, at Vivekananda Cottage, Thousand Island Park, U.S.A. Readers will recall that in this cottage, which was acquired by the Center in 1947 and has since become an international shrine, Swami Vivekananda gave his *Inspired Talks* in 1895 before a group of disciples who had travelled the three hundred and fifty miles from New York to study with him. In this monastery on a hilltop near the St. Lawrence river, surrounded by oak forests, a group of about twenty serious students of Vedanta, attracted not only from widely scattered places in the United States and Canada, but also, in one instance, from Europe, gathered at the cottage for twelve days' intensive study during the summer of 1960. Besides a one-and-a-half-hour class each morning, the students attended the regular meditation in the shrine each afternoon and an hour-long discussion class each evening. Though the synopsis of *Vedantasara* was prepared for Western students of Vedanta, we believe it will be found helpful by serious students of Advaita Vedanta everywhere.—*Ed.*

Vedāntasāra, or the Essence of *Vedānta,* was written by Sadānanda, a monk belonging to the non-dualistic school of Sankarāchārya, who lived somewhere about the middle of the fifteenth century. It is considered an authoritative book on non-dualism.

(1-2) Salutation to Brahman and the guru.

(3) The source-books of Vedanta are the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras together with the commentaries on them.

(4-5) Nature of the treatise and preliminary questions of Vedanta.

Qualifications of the student

(6-12) A general knowledge of the scriptures, the absolution of sins through the performance of daily devotions and activities obligatory on special occasions, and the avoidance of selfish and forbidden actions.

(13) Thus the student's mind becomes pure.

(15-26) Then he is entitled to practise higher disciplines, such as: discrimination between the unreal and the real; renunciation of the unreal; control of the mind; control of the sense-organs, and keeping the mind restrained when they have been controlled; endurance; constant concentration; faith in the words of Vedanta as taught by a teacher; and finally, yearning for freedom.

(27, 33) The subject matter discussed is the identity of the individual soul and *Brahman,* which is of the nature of pure intelligence. *Brahman*: non-dual, self-existent Pure Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, all pervasive, unrelated to the universe yet its substratum or 'support' — creator, preserver, and destroyer — as the desert is the 'support' of the mirage, or the rope, of the illusory snake.

(29) What is attained by the knowledge of identity is the destruction of regarding that identity, and also the attainment of bliss resulting from self-knowledge. The individual soul is eternally one with *Brahman.* The knowledge of this one-ness is veiled by ignorance. The purpose of Vedantic discipline is the destruction of ignorance.

(34) *Ignorance*: inscrutable potency (*Maya, Sakti, Ajnana*) of Brahman, which is the material cause of the universe.

(35-8) *Brahman* associated with collective Ignorance: *Saguna Brahman* (*Brahman* associated with attributes of creation, preservation, and destruction), *Iswara* (Lord) the illuminator of ignorance.

* Numbers in parentheses in the synopsis refer to paragraphs in the original text.

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(34) *Ajnana* (consisting of three *Gunas* of *Sattva* (light), *Rajas* (energy), *Tamas* (darkness or inertia)

(35-8) Macrocosm, or aggregate | Microcosm, individual or disparate

(39) *Iswara* : known as causal body—being the cause of all and also as blissful sheath, state of cosmic sleep in which gross and subtle phenomena merge.

(40-6) Brahman associated with disparate ignorance is *Jiva* or living creature (*Prajna*), causal body (cause of ego, etc.), sheath of bliss, manifested in deep sleep.

(47-48) Aggregate and individual units of ignorance are identical, like forest and trees that compose it. Space enclosed by the forest is identical with the space enclosed by the trees ; the difference lies in the standpoint of the onlooker.

(49-50) Pure Consciousness, called *Turiya* ('Fourth'), non-dual, all-peace, is the support of the aggregate and individual ignorance as well as of the consciousness associated with them — like the unlimited space which is the substratum of the space enclosed by the forest and by the trees.

(50) *Tattvamasi* (*Tat-Tvam-Asi* : That Thou Art). *Tat* : (direct meaning) — Pure consciousness not discriminated from ignorance and the consciousness associated with it (*Saguna Brahman*) ; (implied meaning) — Pure consciousness unassociated with ignorance or unreal limiting adjuncts. *Asi* indicates one-ness.

Cosmology (*Illusory superimposition*)

(34, 51-4) Ignorance is endowed with the two powers of concealment and projection, like sleep, which at first creates oblivion and then projects dreams. Consciousness associated with ignorance (*Saguna Brahman*) is the cause of (55-6) creation (from the standpoint of consciousness, the efficient cause ; from the standpoint of ignorance, the material cause). Illustration : spider (efficient cause of web), silk (material cause of web).

(57-9) Consciousness associated with the projecting power of ignorance (which has a preponderance of *Tamas*) produces *Akasa* (space ; subtle, uncompounded, rudimentary) which produces *Vayu* (subtle air) which produces *Agni* (subtle fire) which produces *Ap* (subtle water) which produces *Prithivi* (subtle earth).

(60-2) Subtle body is produced from a combination of subtle elements. Subtle body : five organs of perception, five organs of action, five *Pranas* (vital energy that sustains the body), intellect (*Buddhi*), mind-stuff (*Chitta*, store-house of memory), mind (*Manas*) and I-consciousness (*Ahamkara*, ego). Subtle body with soul transmigrates.

(63-4) Organs of perception are produced from the *sattva* particles of five subtle elements :

ear,	from	*sattva*	particle of	space
skin,	,,	,,	,,	air
eyes,	,,	,,	,,	fire
tongue,	,,	,,	,,	water
nose,	,,	,,	,,	earth

(each of these organs is the psychic counterpart of the physical organ).

(65-71) Inner organs (intellect, mind-stuff, mind, and I-consciousness) are produced from the combination of *sattva* particles of five subtle elements.

(72-3) *Jiva*, or the living being, is the reflection of soul in the *Vijnanamayakosha* (sheath of intellect) which is the combination of the five organs of perception with the intellect. It is the agent, and experiencer. It transmigrates from one body to another body. This sheath endows the soul with knowledge.

(74) Sheath of mind (*Manomayakosha*) is composed of the mind with the five organs of perception. It endows the soul with the power of will.

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(75-6) Organs of action derive from the *rajas* particles of five elements; they are tongue, hands, feet, anus, genitals.

(77-83) *Prana*: five vital forces, according to their function: inhalation and exhalation (*prana*); downward expulsion of undigested food and drink (*apana*); carrying sensation all over the body (*vyana*); vomiting (*udana*); distribution of nutrition (*samana*).

(88) Sheath of vital force (*Pranamayakosha*) composed of five *pranas* with the organs of action. It endows the soul with the power of activity.

(89-92) Macrocosm: consciousness associated with the aggregate of subtle bodies, called *Sutratma* (thread soul), *Hiranyagarbha* (golden womb), etc. It is the dream state of the world-soul (thread soul).

(93-5) Microcosm: consciousness associated with the individual subtle body. It is called *Taijasa*. It enjoys dream experiences.

Gross elements

(98-9, 102) Five gross elements are the results of combinations of five subtle elements in a particular proportion. E.g., gross *akasa* is composed of 1/2 subtle *akasa*, 1/8 subtle air, 1/8 subtle fire, 1/8 subtle water, 1/8 subtle earth. This proportion applies to the composition of the other gross elements as well.

From these gross elements have evolved:

(104) Fourteen world systems

(105-9) Four kinds of physical bodies (produced from womb, egg, moisture, soil)

(110-12) Macrocosm: consciousness associated with totality of gross bodies is called *Virat*. The physical aggregate, called physical (alimentary) sheath (*Annamayakosha*), functions in waking state of the *Saguna Brahman*.

(113-14) Microcosm: consciousness associated with individual gross body, called *Viswa*. It functions in the waking state of the individual soul.

(115) Both *virat* and *viswa* experience their respective objects, subtle and gross, through organs of perception and action which are animated by different manifestations of *Brahman* called deities (*Devata*). The deities are the controlling agents of the organs of perception and action. These organs, by themselves, are inert.

(116) Both macrocosmic and microcosmic subtle and gross bodies are identical, like the forest and the individual trees composing it.

(118-19) The Vast Universe is the sum total of gross, subtle, and causal (the state of dissolution or non-manifestation) universes. Consciousness associated with the Vast Universe is identical with the consciousness associated with causal, subtle, and gross universes.

Various conceptions of Soul (Atman)

(122) The soul is regarded differently by different thinkers. For their views they quote the scriptures, give reasons and experiences.

(123) An extremely deluded man identifies soul with his own son.

(124) Materialists identify soul with physical body.

(125) Another school of materialists identifies soul with sense-organs.

(126) Another school of materialists identifies soul with vital breath.

(127) Another school of materialists identifies soul with mind.

(Body, senses, vital breath, and mind are modifications of matter.)

(128) The Buddhist identifies the soul with *buddhi*; others, with

(129-31) consciousness associated with ignorance, with bliss, with the void.

(132-4) But all these views are fallacious as they contradict one another.

(135) Vedanta refutes all these views and describes *Atman* as inmost consciousness, eternal, pure, free, real, and which is the illuminer of all unreal entities. This is based upon experience, and supported by the scriptures and reason. This non-dual view is free from conflict and contradiction, because there exists nothing else which it can contradict or

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fight against. The experience of non-duality is conducive to universal welfare.

Refutation or Return Journey
(Apavada)

(137) A snake falsely perceived in a rope is finally discovered to be nothing but rope. Likewise the world of unreal things superimposed through ignorance upon reality is ultimately discovered to be nothing but *Brahman*.

(138) The phenomenal universe is not created by *Brahman* who being the fulfilment of all desires cannot have any impulse to create. It is not modification of *Brahman*, because there is no force outside *It* which can make *It* alter into another substance. Whatever modification is seen in creation is only apparent. If the mirage is regarded as the modification of the desert, this modification is not real; the water of the mirage cannot moisten a single grain of sand because the mirage is not real. Likewise the phenomenal universe — consisting of the *Saguna Brahman*, subtle and gross elements, the *prana*, the subtle and gross bodies, the different worlds, and other physical objects — cannot affect Brahman, because these are unreal.

(139-42) When one discriminates about the gross objects, one finds them as nothing but gross elements. When one discriminates about the gross elements, one finds them as nothing but subtle elements. When one discriminates about the subtle elements, one finds them as nothing else but *Brahman* with attributes. When one discriminates about *Brahman* with attributes, one finds *It* nothing but pure *Brahman* free from all attributes.

(143) *That thou art* (Tattvamasi)

(144) 'That Thou art' is one of the great statements (mahavakyas) of the Vedas. The direct meaning of 'That' is the totality of the phenomenal objects, the creator-God, and the pure *Brahman*.

(146) The direct meaning of 'Thou' is the individual living being, which consists of the individual body, senses, mind, the individual soul, and pure *Brahman* or spirit.

(149-69) Evidently the two terms 'That' and 'Thou' cannot be identical, the former denoting the omniscient and omnipresent Godhead, and the latter denoting a finite creature associated with little knowledge and power. But their identity is supported by the scriptures, indicated by reason, and based upon personal experience. When the direct meaning of a statement is inadmissable, one accepts the implied meaning. (Compare 'sleepless pillow', 'cowherd village on the Ganges', or a 'red-cap [denoting a porter with a red cap] in a railway depot'). In the case of 'That' and 'Thou' the parts that contradict each other are given up, because they are the results of ignorance and hence unreal. Such attributes of 'That' as the omniscience, omnipresence, etc., of the creator, as also such attributes of 'Thou' as little knowledge or power, are the results of ignorance. When these attributes are given up, what remains common to both the terms is pure consciousness or *Brahman*. This is the implied meaning of the Vedic statement 'That Thou art'.

(170) *I am Brahman*

(171) When the teacher says to the student 'That Thou art', the latter meditates on the statement and ultimately realizes *Brahman* to be his real nature. These are the steps :

(*a*) There is created a mental state which takes the form of non-dual *Brahman*.

(172) (*b*) The mental state illumined by the reflection of pure consciousness destroys the ignorance regarding the latter.

(*c*) When ignorance is destroyed, its effect, mind, too is destroyed.

(173) (*d*) When the mind is destroyed, Consciousness or *Brahman* which is reflected in the mind becomes one with Pure *Brahman*. It is like the reflection of a face reverting to the actual face when the mirror is destroyed.

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Three spiritual practices until Brahman *is realized*

(181) (*a*) Hearing of the scriptures from a qualified teacher.

(191) (*b*) Reflecting on or constant thinking of non-dual *Brahman* by the application of reason.

(192) (*c*) Meditation which excludes ideas which are other than *Brahman*.

Samadhi

(194-5) Two kinds :

(*a*) *Savikalpa,* in which the distinction between the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge is retained, although it is realized that *Brahman* pervades all three. This *samadhi* is experienced by dualistic mystics.

(197-8) (*b*) *Nirvikalpa samadhi,* in which all distinctions are effaced. It is like a lump of salt dissolved in water. This *samadhi* is the goal of non-dualists.

Disciplines for the attainment of samadhi

(201) General disciplines : non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-acceptance of gifts.

(202) Specific disciplines : cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of the scriptures and meditation on God.

(203) Posture (There are many postures described in the Yoga books. The best posture is that which is free from strain. While meditating one should keep the head, the neck, and the spinal column in a straight line. One should sit erect).

(204) Control of vital force.

(205) Self-withdrawal (Not allowing the senses to go outward when they are restrained).

(206) Concentration (Fixing the mind on one object, to the exclusion of all others).

(207) Meditation (intermittent, because of deficiency in concentration).

(208) Absorption.

The above-mentioned disciplines lead to *nirvikalpa samadhi.*

(209) Four obstacles are created by the mind when withdrawn from the world but not yet resting on *Brahman* :

(210) (*a*) Sleep.

(211) (*b*) Distraction.

(212) (*c*) Attachment to the memory of an enjoyment experienced long ago.

(213) (*d*) Enjoyment of bliss.

(215) How to overcome the obstacles :

(*a*) Sleep — stimulate the mind by gentle physical exercise, reading, or music.

(*b*) Distraction—bring it back to calmness by perseverance.

(*c*) Attachment — remember the harmful result of the past experience.

(*d*) Taste of bliss — go forward till self-knowledge is attained.

Liberation

(217) A liberated man, through the knowledge of *Brahman* as his own self, is free from ignorance and its effects, such as accumulated past actions,[1] doubts, errors, ego, etc.

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[1] *The three kinds of karma* :

Sanchita, or accumulated action : actions performed in a previous life, and which will bear fruit in a future life.

Agami, or future : actions performed now, and which will bear fruit in future.

Prarabdha, or fruit-bearing actions : actions done in the previous life, and which are responsible for the present birth. The present body continues to live as long as the momentum given by this *karma* endures. Even the enlightened man cannot avoid the result of *prarabdha karma.* One may send a wheel rolling, by giving a few pushes. Even when the hand is taken off, the wheel continues to move until the momentum is exhausted. Or suppose two wheels are joined by an axle. When they are moving, somebody cuts the axle with a sharp instrument. Yet the wheels will continue to move till the momentum is exhausted. In the case of the enlightened person, one wheel represents the mind, the other the body, and the axle the ego. In *nirvikalpa samadhi* the ego is destroyed, but still the body and mind continue to move as long as the momentum of the *prarabdha karma* lasts. Though the enlightened man experiences the results of *prarabdha karma* through his body, mind, or sense-organs, he is not affected by them for he has known their unreal nature.

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(219-21) According to one school of non-dualists complete liberation is possible in this life (jivanmukti). According to another, it is possible only after death (videhamukti), because even an enlightened man cannot be completely free from such demands of his body as hunger and thirst. Through a slight trace of ignorance he maintains certain activities which are not opposed to knowledge (such as eating, studying, and teaching). He may be subject to sickness, etc., which are characteristics of the body; blindness, deafness, etc., which are characteristics of the sense-organs; grief and disappointment, which are characteristics of the mind. But he does not take these experiences as real, for he has already known their unreal nature.

(222-5) In his case, only good desires persist. No evil can ever be done by him, for all his evil propensities were destroyed while he was striving for the knowledge of Brahman. He does not strive after the ethical virtues, such as non-violence, humility, etc., which characterize his thoughts and actions spontaneously.

(226-7) His body lasts as long as the momentum given by his *prarabdha karma* lasts. In his case the life force does not go elsewhere for re-incarnation. It merges in *Brahman*. After the attainment of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, he realized the eternally free nature of the soul. Now, after the falling of the body, that knowledge becomes impressed upon him. He further realizes that the birth and death of the soul, its bondage and liberation, disciplines and study, have no meaning from the standpoint of the Soul. One discusses these things as long as one takes the phenomenal world to be real.

चरैवेति

REMOVAL OF COVERINGS

What is the greatest purifying agent? The *Gītā* replies: It is knowledge. All actions without exception culminate in knowledge. (IV. 33.) How are we to attain it? We are advised to prostrate ourselves at the feet of the wise. We must lovingly render them all sorts of service, and question them again and again with a guileless heart. Those seers of Truth, those well-wishers of humanity, will surely unfold that knowledge to us. What will be the inner content of that knowledge? We are told that we shall first be enabled to see all beings within our own selves. Next we shall see them and ourselves in the Supreme Self. Of what assistance will be such knowledge? We are assured it will act like a raft to carry us across all weakness, all ignorance, all sin. As fire reduces fuel to ashes, so will this knowledge reduce to nothingness past weakness, ignorance, and sin. And what else can anyone wish to get out of 'life'? The Self shining in all its glory, Peace that passeth understanding, — can there be anything more worthy of gain than this?

Two comments can be made here. One is what Swami Vivekananda says in *Karma Yoga*. This knowledge, says he, is 'inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside.' What happens when we 'learn' anything? Simply this: We take the 'cover' off our own soul, which is 'a mine of infinite knowledge'. If Newton 'discovered' the law of gravitation, that knowledge was really in his own mind. The falling apple gave the right suggestion, 'and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them'. This 'we call the law of gravitation'.

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All knowledge, secular or spiritual, is in the mind all the time. 'Suggestion is the friction that brings it out.' 'When the covering is being slowly taken off, we say we are learning.'

The second comment is taken from Swamiji's *Rāja Yoga*. Speaking about Īśvara (I. 26), he says : 'It is true that all knowledge is within ourselves, but this has to be called forth by another knowledge.' Dead, insentient matter can never do it. 'Knowing beings must be with us to call forth what is in us.' In other words, we must resort to competent teachers. 'The world was never without them.' Sincere students always got them when the time was ripe. Swamiji completes the argument thus : 'If there are men teachers, god teachers, or angel teachers, they are all limited ; who was the teacher before them ? We are forced to admit, as a last conclusion, one teacher who is not limited by time, and that One Teacher of infinite knowledge, without beginning or end, is called God.' No real seer ever claims wisdom to be his personal and unique acquisition. Clear-sightedness and humility make him treat it, and transmit it, as 'revealed'.

* * *

Apollonius had his 'knowledge' awakened through the contact of Iarchas. 'The ordered heirarchy of the cosmos' was explained to him with the aid of the allegory of a ship. 'God,' said Iarchas, 'is the captain of the ship, and lesser deities the ship's officers, while men fulfil their functions as seamen, warriors, and other workers on board the vessel.' God, 'the begetter of the universe', sets the course and steers the way. Much of what was taught only tended to confirm what Apollonius had already 'discovered' as true. Inner purification is to be the 'house-cleaning in expectation of the divine guest'. When He comes, and takes possession of the human heart, man is 'saved'. Nay, more ; he becomes competent to work 'for the salvation of mankind'. Grace is not the result of 'an act of faith', based on the 'acknowledgment' of certain events of the past. Nor is it the outcome of any sacrament. Grace comes because God chooses to 'disclose Himself to a human heart ready to receive Him'. Henceforth Apollonius lived 'in a state of grace', undisturbed by his preaching or other activities. Danger or persecution could not upset it. He clearly saw that man can 'come to God by many ways'. That gave him real tolerance. The bigotry that tries to extirpate 'heretics' was 'alien to his enlightened mind'. 'He did not consider himself the founder of a new religion or as a divine being', except in the sense that the 'ether' or the 'world-soul' made him, too, 'of the stuff of which the gods are made'.

Dr Schnur remarks that it was not to Athens, with its Academy, that Apollonius turned his steps to gain wisdom and stability. The wisdom of the West might make a man 'humane, civilized, even good', 'but a message that proclaimed not merely the improvement of the individual but the salvation of mankind had to come from the East' — from the 'cloud-girt mountain in Nepal', so far as Apollonius was concerned.

Sarva-bhūta-hite ratih : Loving dedication of one's life for the welfare of *all creatures* : Was not this kept as the natural outward expression of inward illumination before aspirants in the East ?

भग चरैवेति । **SUBANDHU**

Quotations about Apollonius are from *Mystic Rebels*, as before.

The soul can only receive impulses from another soul, and from nothing else. The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru — the teacher ; but there are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything and offer to take others on their shoulders ; and thus the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch. Higher and nobler than all ordinary ones, are another set of teachers the Avataras of Ishvara, in the world. They can transmit spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

The Reminiscences of Swami Akhandanandaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna have been translated by Sri Narayan Chandra Bhattacharya and edited by Prof. K. Subrahmanyam.

Br. Sarada Chaitanya and Br. Divya Chaitanya pay their respects to the great masters to whose Order they belong.

Brahmacharini Sharada is from the Sarada Math, Dakshineswar.

Dr Vishwanath Prasad Varma, M.A. (Patna), M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago) is Professor of Politics, Patna University and former Research Scholar in Buddhist Philosophy.

Dr B. H. Kapadia, M.A., Ph.D., is Reader and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth, Gujarat.

Swami Nityabodhananda of Geneva gave a series of seven talks on the Sense of the Sacred at the Sorbonne University, Paris. The English version of the first talk in November '60, is being published here.

Swami Nikhilananda is Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York.

ON READING VIVEKANANDA

The Centenary of Swami Vivekananda is approaching. In 1963 it will be observed with suitable celebrations. Though there are various ways of paying our respects to a great man, the best method however will be to popularize his life and teachings. With that idea attempts surely will be made by the organizers. Books play a dominant role in clear understanding. But reading ultimately is an individual affair. Ready availability is at best only an appetiser. So it is the individual who is to read and benefit by them. Often we are generally informed about a great man, knowing not so thoroughly his views. So it is necessary that a great effort is made to read his Complete Works. Many people have not enough time. The voluminousness of Swamiji's writings may scare them. But if we calculate, we find that if a man reads for fifteen minutes a day, he will be able to finish reading the Complete Works in two years. There are over 4,000 pages in eight volumes. The last five volumes are a little easier than the earlier ones. On an average a man can read about six pages in fifteen minutes. Therefore about 4,234 pages can be read in less than two years. Books are available in Indian languages also. The speed will be more if they are read in the mother tongue. So we hope those who have some liking for Swamiji may try to read his works daily for fifteen minutes and finish the whole thing by the centenary. This of course can be done at any time but we are speaking of the centenary, for an occasion gives a special interest and a time limit. Both these, as is well known, are great incentives. In a number of cases, we have found that this daily reading suits best, though there are some who find it convenient to read them in a shorter time devoting several hours a day. Absorption in the thoughts and enthusiasm are their great help. A brilliant student of Engineering, I remember, finished the old seven volumes in five weeks in a vacation. Of course, he had an earlier background of religious reading. However, for most of the students and employees, it will be convenient to read them slowly. It will however require determined patience and sustained enthusiasm. The assimilation also will be better, specially if there are occasional recapitulations. The writings of Swamiji are capable of helping men and women in all walks of life. We hope there will be a determined attempt on the part of the general admirers of Swamiji to be thoroughly acquainted with his writings by reading them for a few minutes a day. And people who have already drunk deep of this perennial source should make others aware of this fountain of energy, strength and bliss.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE CONCEPT OF MIND IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY: By Dr Sarasvati Chennakesavan. Asia Publishing House. Pp. 1-164. Price Rs. 10.00.

This book under review was the thesis approved by the Madras University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The author states in the introduction that the book was meant to be a comprehensive study of all the Indian systems but that as a result of the unwieldy literature she had to confine herself to the Astika darsanas and to the Advaita Vedanta alone.

It is not often that we have two books with almost similar titles dealing practically with the same topic. The book under review deals with the mind which is always an intriguing and elusive subject to the Western philosophers. But it is comprehensively discussed in our Sastra literature. Professor Ryle in his book, Concept of Mind, discusses the same subject from a different point of view altogether and arrives at a different set of conclusions.

The book has five chapters, the last being a comparative estimate of the Indian and Western treatment of mind. In the first chapter the author traces the nature of mind or manas from the Vajasaneya Samhita and the Aitareya Aranyaka down through the Upanisads and the several systems. Regarding the Advaitic treatment of mind, she has first given a general survey of the metaphysical theory before dealing with the epistemological aspect. The Advaitic discussion of mind and perception is interesting but rather difficult for the novice. The author reiterates throughout the fundamental thesis that while in Indian philosophy a distinction is made between the mind and the soul the West ignores the self and the term mind is made to stand for both the subject and the object.

In chapter two which may be better styled the function of the mind, the central question is the mechanism of knowledge, as given in the different systems. The author gives a good descriptive account of the manas as discussed by these systems. She is in complete agreement with the Advaitic theory that in perception the mind goes out to the object and she argues that it is more plausible than the accepted theory of light emanating from the physical object and striking the retina. The mind's movement is not metaphorical but actual and what is more, it envelops the object after reaching it. The author merely bases her conclusion on the inadequacies in the accounts of perception given by the psychologists and taking her stand on W. James (1908) who states that a larger portion of our perception comes out of our own mind, naively argues that it is hence right that the Advaitin emphasises the out-going of the mind and its assuming the form of the object. Modern psychology repudiates the atomic sensation and the consequent reconstruction theory and even non-gestalt schools argue that the object or the situation is perceived as a whole and not reconstructed piecemeal. They do not of-course recognise the existence of the mind and an empirical psychology can hardly do otherwise. The author discusses such topics as the causes of forgetting, smiriti etc in a very interesting manner. The theories of perceptions in all the schools including the Khyati vadas are next discussed in the third chapter. The author then takes up the question of discipline of the mind as given by the Yoga and the Advaitic systems. Asparsa Yoga, Amanaibhava, Nirvikalpa samadhi and such other concepts are described.

The last chapter is devoted to the aligning of facts regarding mind and to a comparative estimate of Western and Indian thought on the subject. The Self not only feels, wills and thinks but is also self-conscious. The questions that this statement raises are answered by the author by positing that the self has an essential and a contingent nature. From the latter view the self acts, feels and thinks; form the former view of pure transcendentalism it is that which is apart from other things and is the pure witness or Saksi. The self which is subject can never be the object. She then takes up the several ways in which the mind is viewed by Western philosophers. The neutral monism of Russel is discussed in detail and it is described as a notable contribution to the solution of mind-matter problem. But Russell's merit consists in this that he believes that mind is material or that mind and matter have the same origin. The author criticises Ryle's position that there is nothing mental and that there are no real mental activities. She lays her finger on the real defect of the Western thoeries regarding the problem of mind that they view mind and matter as disjunctively capable of mutual exclusion and as exhausting the whole field.

The author has collected a large mass of information on her theme from several sources with the exception of the Bauddha and the Jaina

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systems including the non-Advaitic systems of Vedanta, and has done a very useful work in presenting them in a logical form. She has also specified the difference in the treatment of the subject between the Indian and the Western thinkers. The book is a learned contribution to Indian Philosophy, and its utility is much enhanced by the bibliography and the index at the end.

S. R. SASTRI

VEDANTA EXPLAINED: *Sankara's commentary on the Brahma-Sutras.* By Vinayak Hari Date, foreword by R. D. Ranade. Vol. II. Published by Booksellers' Publishing Co., Mehendale Buildings, V. P. Road, Bombay-4. Pages 550. Price Rs. 27-50.

It is a matter of pleasure that Dr Vinayak Hari Date has brought out his Second volume after going through considerable hardships. We share his sorrow that his Spiritual guide Prof. Ranade did not live to put on this volume his seal of assent.

The work is a free translation of Sri Sankara's Commentary on the Brahma-Sutras from Adhyaya Second, Third quarter, to the end of the treatise. The translation is no literal one, but expository and explanatory. It does not deviate from the thought of the original but only strives to give a readable and easy rendering of it. The language is direct and lucid. The special feature in the volume is the addition of a new section of original writing entitled 'New Light on the philosophy of Sankara' purporting to set forth the fundamentals of Sankara's Advaita in its spiritual and metaphysical aspects.

Sankara's work on the Sutras is evidently his masterpiece in form and scope. Instead of dwelling on inferior presentations of his doctrine, it is an immensely rewarding experience to devote oneself to that great work. Prof. Date has rendered substantial aid to students of Sankara not equipped enough to comprehend the Sanskrit of the Acharya directly. It is perhaps inevitable that in the process of transferring the thoughts of a master-mind into a new medium with the express design of making them easily understandable, the rigour and grandeur of the original composition should be lost to some extent. But it is a help all the same, though one misses the classic elevation of style.

Prof. Date's original essay is a distinct contribution. It is charged with a certain spirit of piety and devotion and exhibits a mystical predilection. We are accustomed to expositions of Advaita that make much of its dialectical conquests. But the present outline is a refreshing contrast as it proceeds on the conviction that the aim of Sankara's philosophy 'is through and through moral and spiritual.' This approach characterises Prof. Date's account throughout.

There is a second departure, which is not one of mere approach or general outlook, but relates to the essential tenets. Sankara is conventionally understood as propounding an acosmic Absolutism, a theory of Brahman as Nirguna and Nishprapancha. Such a conception naturally involves the idea of the unreality of the empirical world of matter, change and plurality and the postulation of the principle of Maya as responsible for the obscuration and mispresentation of reality. The essay under study departs from this view of the doctrine of Sankara. For Prof. Date Brahman is not quite attributeless. He says 'The various names and forms of this world may provide occasions to know the qualities and powers of Brahman; but the powers and qualities do not disappear even though the names and forms disappear' (519). The world is not unreal. It is unreal in separateness from Brahman, but quite real as located in Brahman. He says: 'With Brahman the world is real, without it is unreal' (493) 'The many which were unreal on account of their being viewed as having a separate existence from the *one* are now real as manifestations of it.' (504). Again Maya is construed as a real aspect of Brahman and not as a prinicple of falsification. We are told: '..Maya is the name of the powers of Brahman and not of cosmic illusion' (498).

This re-interpretation of Sankara's Metaphysics, understanding Brahman as concrete and dynamic, the world as real when rightly apprehended as a manifestation of Brahman and Maya as simply the creative power of Brahman, is certainly new and it has been ably argued out on the strength of a considerable volume of evidence. The natural reaction to such a presentation would be the impression that Sankara's real position is hardly distinguishable from that of Ramanuja and Sri Aurobindo and that the scholastic followers of Sankara misconstrued it hopelessly. Our author explicitly dissociates himself from the post-Sankarite versions of Advaita (498). He has the courage of his conviction to assert: 'Historically, it may be said that Gaudapada (as also the Upanishads) is the precursor of Sankara, and that Ramanuja, and Sri Aurobindo are the successors who completed the philosophy of Sankara. Sankara has not only explicitly formulated what was already implicitly present in Gaudapada, but has also clearly shown in advance the truth of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo' (505).

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In a review like this it is sufficient simply to note the novelty of this version of the central doctrines. The reviewer may, if he so chooses, indicate whether the unconventional standpoint is fully substantiated. Dr Date is not alone in this direction of thought. Dr Radhakrishnan, before him, has somewhat toned down the doctrine of Maya in his exposition of Advaita in his History of Indian philosophy. He has influenced a host of writers in this matter. Dr Date goes the same way and perhaps he is affected powerfully by the concrete and dynamic absolutism of Sri Aurobindo. All that can be said at this stage is that it is a 'plausible' case. For a conclusive demonstration of the validity of the present interpretation, a fuller examination of the writings of Sankara is called for. It must also be established that the entire galaxy of post-Sankara Advaitins beginning from Padmapada and Sureswara down to Madhusudana Sarasvati went off the track. It has also to be shown that critics of Sankara like Ramanuja, Madhva and Sri Aurobindo raised objections that, however much they may apply to the post-Sankara Advaita, are irrelevant to the original formulation of the master. Dr Date has initiated a fruitful and illuminating line of inquiry by his thesis and much remains to be done by way of substantiation. He deserves gratitude and congratulation for his able and suggestive work on an outstanding treatise in Indian philosophy.

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

SRI KRISHNA: His philosophy and His spiritual path. By Bahadur Mal. Pub. Vishveshvaranand V. R. Institute, Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India. Pages 334. Price Rs. 4.

This is a readable book giving a running account of the personality of Lord Krishna, his philosophy and the line of Sadhana laid down by him. In the first part dealing with Sri Krishna, the author discusses the several theories relating to the probable date of his life and accepts 1400 B.C. as the most likely period. He rightly rejects the view held by influential Indologists that Sri Krishna of the Bhagavata and the Puranas (the Avatara-purusha) is different from the Vrishni Prince of that name. Among the interesting facts to which Dr Bahadur Mal refers is that *Lakulin* or *Lakulisa* who is traditionally regarded as the founder of Shaivism lived in Mathura the capital of the Yadava and Vrishni clans. 'Mathura seems to be the centre where Lakulisa taught his doctrines ... as recently as 1945 an image of Lakulisa was discovered at Mathura.' (P. 56)

We are unable to accept the verdict of the author that 'the character of Radha was the invention of a very late writer' etc. We wish he had gone a little deeper into the esoteric tradition that is associated with the life of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna was certainly something more, nay infinitely more, than a religious teacher or a far-sighted statesman he is here described to be. His avatarhood stands in no need of proving by modern scholars; the labours of his Mission on Earth are still potent in the spiritual consciousness of the Indian race.

The synthetic nature of the Teaching of the Gita reconciling the different traditions of the Veda, Sankhya, Upanishads etc. and the practical turn given to spiritual Sadhana by Sri Krishna are well brought out by the author.

M. P. PANDIT.

PERIODICAL

THE VISVABHARATI QUARTERLY (*Silver Jubilee issue*, Vol. XXV, Editor: Kshitish Roy). Santiniketan, Birbhum, West Bengal. Pages 319. Price Rs. 10.

This is a bumper number containing about forty-two contributions in the shape of poems, articles and short stories along with fine illustrations which are reproductions in colour and otherwise from eminent artistes like Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Atul Bose and others. But the peculiarity of this special issue is that the contribution as well as the pictures are all selections from earlier productions and practically nothing has been done for the first time for this particular publication. Nevertheless one cannot lay down the volume indifferently because of its contents having met with the readers' eye in some other former publication. On the other hand almost all of them are of enduring value either for the matter or for the manner of their expression, and really one should congratulate the Editor that such a judicious choice has been made with an eye to the wide variety of interesting topics ranging from educational, social and psychological problems to purely literary and critical studies of both subjects of art and personalities who have played prominent part in the renaissance of modern India. To mention only a few, we have scholarly dissertations from well-known savants like Winternitz, C. L. Holden, Aronson, Swami Nikhilananda, E. L. Allen, Darek Stanford; Pen-potraits from Surendranath Tagore, The Marquess of Zetland, C. F. Andrews, Indira Devi Choudrani, Bhuddhadeva Bose; poems from Yone Noguchi, Ernest Rhys, Sarojini Naidu; and short stories from Geza Gardonyi, H. M. Nevinson and others.

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The first article is on Visvabharati itself from the pen of the poet, the founder, whose birthday centenary will be celebrated throughout the world in the course of the year 1961. There is also an interesting article on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda through western eyes by Hallan Tennyson.

A more substantial volume to mark the significant occasion of the completion of the 25th year of an eminent and honoured journal as the Visvabharati Quarterly cannot be conceived of. We are indeed grateful to the publishers for having not priced it exorbitantly, considering the material used and the matter it carries within the elegantly designed covers.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The 126th birthday Tithipuja of Sri Ramakrishna was observed on Friday, the 17th February, 1961. The day started at 4-30 a.m. with group meditation followed by Mangalarati at 5 a.m. After devotional songs by devotees and chanting of select portions of the Gita and the Upanishads by students, the worship in the shrine started at 7 a.m. and came to a close at 12-30 p.m., after the homa was performed. The Chandi, Gita and stotras were also chanted. About 1200 devotees and 1200 Daridranarayanas were served with food prasad. After the evening service in the shrine, the Gospel of the Master was read by Swami Paratparananda and then the gathering was addressed by Swamis Sarvajnananda and Kailashananda.

The public function came off on Sunday, the 19th February. A large picture of Sri Ramakrishna was tastefully decorated. The silent reading of the Life and Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna was started at 8 a.m. About 100 devotees took part and read their respective portions. At 10-30 the gathering of devotees was addressed by Brahmacharis Turiya Chaitanya, Raghava Chaitanya, Divya Chaitanya, Sri Ramanan, Ramamurti, Bharatan and Swamis Maitrananda and Kailashananda.

At 3 p.m., the Harikatha on the Rama Nama Prabhavam by Sri Srirangam V. S. Venkataramana Rao began. The public meeting started at 5 p.m. with the Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. Ramakrishnan, I.C.S., Judge, High Court, Madras in the Chair. Sri N. Bhaktavatsalam, Swami Adidevananda and Sri N. Subrahmanyam spoke in Telugu, English and Tamil respectively. After the distribution of prizes to school students and recitation by a prize-winner, the president delivered his speech in English. Sri S. K. Sivaraman proposed a vote of thanks.

After Arati there was Bhajana by the Ramakrishna Math Bhajana Party, led by Swami Priyananda.

Sri N. Bhaktavatsalam dwelt upon Sri Ramakrishna as the teacher, how from his boyhood he corrected people who were wont to stray away. Swami Adidevananda and the Chairman pointed out the unique synthesis of religion, synthesis of practice and synthesis of Reality achieved by Sri Ramakrishna. India has been from the time of Veda Vyasa aiming at this integration, and perfection in this integration was achieved by Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna not only said that all religions were true but in his own life practised them and came to the same conclusion. He practised all types of sadhanas and thus established that the Reality can be achieved by either Bhakti, Jnana, Karma or Yoga (concentration) by any one or all of these combined. That the Reality was one was also proved by Sri Ramakrishna. Sri N. Subrahmanyam who spoke next explained the salutation verse beginning with *Sthapakaya ca dharmasya* in lucid Tamil with quotations from Tamil saints. The Chairman dwelt at length on the idea of synthesis developed by Sri Ramakrishna and said that we were fortunate to have such an Incarnation and at a time when it was most needed.

RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BHUBANESWAR

Raja Maharaj's Birthday Celebration

On the occasion of the birthday of Srimat Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna Deva and the first President of Sri Ramakrishna Math and Mission, a special function was held at Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar (Orissa) on the 18th Jan.

The big compound of the Ashrama was beautifully decorated with festoons, flowers and plants. Big and beautiful samianas and tents too placed here and there added to the charm.

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The solemn function started at early dawn with Mangal Arati which was followed by special Puja of Ramakrishna Deva, Chandi Path, Homa and Bhajans by Kirtan Sudhakar Haridas Chatterjee of Calcutta. At 11 A.M. Pandit Surendra Nath Chakravarty (Vedasastri) gave an interesting discourse on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Brahmananda, accompanied by beautiful songs.

The devotees now began to pour in from far and near, from Puri, Cuttack and even from remote corners of Orissa. By noon their number swelled to several thousand and more than 2,500 of them took Prasad sitting. During the time they were also served through mike with sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, in Oriya and Bengali with the accompaniment of Bhajan.

At 5 P.M. a public meeting was arranged under a decorated Pandal with Dr K. N. Misra, ex-Principal and Surgeon Superintendent of Orissa Medical College, Cuttack in the chair. Sri Gaurikumar Brahma, M.A., Dip. in Ed. (Patna) and Swami Jnanatmananda of Belur Math delivered beautiful lectures on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and those of his disciples like Swamis Vivekanandaji, Brahmanandaji and others. The President in his learned concluding speech gave a very fine account of their lives and teachings, particularly those of Swami Brahmanandaji, whom he had the occasion to meet and revere several times in 1917 and 1918 when the great Swami founded the present Math at Bhubaneswar.

The meeting ended late at night with melodious Kirtan by the Kirtan Sudhakar and Ramanam Sankirtan by the Sadhus and devotees of the Order. Many elites of the Capital including Sri Y. N. Sukthankar, Governor attended the function.

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.... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

VOL. XLVII APRIL 1961 No. 12

IN THE LOVING GUISE OF FUN

Sri Ramakrishna and M. were talking together in the pine-grove of the Dakshineswar temple-garden. It was winter. The sun had just risen.

Sri Ramakrishna: 'I am shown everything beforehand. I recognized you on hearing you read the *Chaitanya Bhagavat*. You are my own, the same substance, like father and son. Before you came here, you didn't know who you were. Now you will know. It is God who, as Guru, makes one know.

'Once a tigress attacked a herd of goats. As she sprang on her prey, she gave birth to a cub and died. The cub grew up in the company of the goats. At first it was nursed by the she-goats, and later on, it began to eat grass and bleat like the goats. Gradually it became a big tiger; but still it ate grass and bleated. When attacked by other animals, it would run away like the goats. One day a fierce-looking tiger attacked the herd. It was amazed to see a tiger in the herd, eating grass and running away at its approach. It left the goats and caught hold of the grass-eating tiger which began to bleat and tried to run away. But the fierce tiger dragged it to the water and said: "Now look at your face in the water. It is just like mine". Next it pressed a piece of meat into its mouth. But the grass-eating tiger would not swallow it and began to bleat again. Gradually, however, it got the taste for blood and relished the meat. Then the wild tiger said: "Now you see, there is no difference between you and me. Come along and follow me into the forest."

'Eating grass is like enjoying "lust and greed". To bleat and run away like a goat, is to behave like an ordinary man. Going away with the new tiger, is like taking shelter with the Guru who awakens one's spiritual consciousness, and recognizing him alone as one's relative. To see one's face rightly, is to know one's real Self.'

Sri Ramakrishna stood up. There was silence all around, except for the gentle rustling of the pine-needles and the murmuring of the Ganga.

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SELF-NEGATION OR SELF-EXPANSION

How to sublimate the egotistic idea, by negating or expanding, is a question that perplexes many. Sri Ramakrishna said in different contexts that a devotee should practise humility. He should pray to the Lord that he has no spiritual qualities and so his only hope is divine grace. Swami Vivekananda, on the other hand, spoke of the glory of the human soul and said that self-confidence and positive thoughts should always be cultivated. Whoever does not believe in himself is an atheist, he said.

About the need of true humility and its usefulness, Sri Ramakrishna said :

'If you wish to thread a needle, make the thread pointed and remove all protruding fibres. Then it will easily pass through the eye of the needle. So, if you wish to concentrate your heart and soul on God, be meek, humble and poor in spirit and remove all the spreading filaments of desire.'

'To become great one must be humble. The nest of the sky-lark is on the earth below, but it soars high into the sky. High ground is not fit for cultivation ; low ground is necessary, so that water may stand on it.'

'Rain-water will never stand still on high ground, but will run down to the lowest level ; even so the mercy of God remains in the heart of the lowly, but drains off from those of the vain and proud.'

'Unless one becomes as simple as a child, one cannot reach divine illumination.'

'It is needful to have no egotistical feeling, such as the conceit of the preacher.'

'The tree laden with fruit always bends low. So if you wish to be great, be lowly and meek.'

'Be as free from vanity as the dead leaf carried on by the high wind.'

But this humility should not be for show.

'Many a man with a show of humility says, "I am like an earth-worm grovelling in the dust." In this way, thinking themselves always to be worms, in time they become weak in spirit like worms. Let not despondency ever enter into your heart. Despair is the greatest enemy in the path of progress. As a man thinks, so he becomes.'

Swami Vivekananda forcefully stressed the need of self-expansion by extending the ego to embrace the whole creation. This can be done if we are aware of the all-powerful nature of the Self. So he said :

'The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself.'

'Have faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things. Let not the barks of puppies frighten you, no, not even the thunderbolts of heaven, but stand up and work.'

'What makes you weep, my friend ? In you is all power. Summon up your all-powerful nature, oh mighty one, and this whole universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates, and not matter. It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their bodies that piteously cry, "Weak, weak, we are weak".'

'Vedanta recognizes no sin, it only recognizes error ; and the greatest error, says the Vedanta, is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power and you cannot do this and that.'

'Rajas is badly needed just now. More than ninety per cent of those whom you now take to be men of the Sattwa quality are only steeped in the deepest Tamas. What we now want is an immense amount of Rajasika energy, for the whole country is wrapped in the shroud of Tamas.'

'Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.'

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Sri Ramakrishna too said :

> 'The faith-healers order their patients to repeat with full conviction the words, "There is no illness here at all." The patients repeat them, and this mental suggestion helps to drive off the disease. So if you think yourself to be morally weak, you will actually become so in a short time. Know and believe that you are of immense power and the power will come to you at last.'

He warns us that humility should not be confused with weakness or want of self-respect.

> 'A true man (*Manush*) is only he who is a *Manhus* — one endowed with a sense of self-respect. Others are men only in name.'

Sri Ramakrishna distinguishes between the two types of ego saying :

> 'There are two types of egoes, one "ripe" and the other "unripe". "Nothing is mine, whatever I see, or feel, or hear, nay, even this body itself, is not mine ; I am always eternal, free and all-knowing," — such ideas arise from the "ripe" ego. "This is my house, this is my child, this is my wife, this is my body," — thoughts of this kind are the manifestation of the "unripe" ego.'

While the unripe ego must be given up, the ripe ego can be retained. As for humility and pride, he beautifully said :

> 'No pride is pride that expresses the glory of the soul. No humility is humility that humiliates the self.'

So this statement of Sri Ramakrishna gives us a clue to the true understanding of the ego. Now the above two are the attitudes practised by followers of different yogas. The age-old method of a devotee is to debase himself, talk disparagingly about his qualities and then try to control the ego. The follower of the path of knowledge, however, takes the other way. He identifies himself with the Atman and its all-glorious nature and tries to imbibe its qualities. He refuses to admit that the defects are in the soul, for really they are of the body and the mind.

An interesting remark had been made by Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. While commenting on the extreme humility of Nag Mahashay, another devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, he said that Mahamaya, the Great Illusioner, tried to bind the two with Her rope of Maya. But while Nag Mahashay slipped out through the little opening of the noose because of his complete negation of the self, Swami Vivekananda could not be bound because he was too big for the rope, for he identified himself with the Self which is all-powerful.

The difference here is, it will be noticed, between the two types of the self. While self is with a small s in one, it is with the capital S in the other. The Jnanayogis identify themselves with the deathless nature of the Atman which is not different from Brahman and so is all-powerful. The Bhaktiyogis consider themselves as a part or servant of the all-powerful Lord. So they can never think that they are themselves all-powerful. All their strength depends completely on the Lord.

The Jnana attitude on which Swami Vivekananda gave much stress has a great social value. People practising this identification with the Self are apt to imbibe great confidence and courage, solace and succour. As William James said on hearing Swami Vivekananda's lecture on the Atman :

> '*An Absolute One, and I that One,* — surely we have here a religion which emotionally considered, has a high pragmatic value, it imparts a perfect sumptuosity of security.'

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There was a historical reason too for Swami Vivekananda to stress so much on this aspect. The last few centuries we were too much cowed down by the feeling of our utter unworthiness. In social field it had a very debasing effect. Swamiji tried to raise Indians from lethargy and humiliation of considering oneself as useless.

This positive attitude is psychologically very beneficial too. It is very forcefully being preached now a days by many religio-psychologists. The pressure that is brought on the mind by the feeling that one is a born sinner is sometimes seen to be too much for him. This idea of the Atman releases him from tension.

About the practice of humility, this must be said that it is the age-old method followed by devotees throughout the world. Repent and you will be pardoned, is the burden of this teaching. God is not realizable by any amount of spiritual practices. It is His grace that is all-powerful. Surrender is the best way to have it. Moreover, who can claim that he has spiritual strength enough to get liberation? The feeling of one's weakness and failings is there in every man, and he who feels the pressure surrenders to God. It is on this principle that the idea of confession grew in Christianity. The element of humility has been stressed in all devotional schools. Some Western writers and holy men praised it in the following words:

'The doctrines of grace humble man without degrading, and exalt without inflating him.' — *Charles Hodge.*

'Let me truly feel that in myself I am nothing, and at once, through every inlet of my soul, God comes in, and is everything in me.' — *W. Mountford.*

'Should you ask me, what is the first thing in religion? I should reply, the first, second, and third thing therein—nay, all—is humility.' — *St. Augustine.*

'God walks with the humble; he reveals himself to the lowly; he gives understanding to the little ones; he discloses his meaning to pure minds, but hides his grace from the envious and the proud.'

— *Thomas a Kempis.*

Self-centredness is a great bane of human life. Negating it in the case of puffed up people is surely beneficial. Positing the glories of the Self will be very useful for those who are burdened with a feeling of incompleteness and inferiority. Whatever method is followed, it will be a boon to individuals as well as to society.

So we see that each method is equally useful. Both are philosophically satisfying from the standpoints of non-dualism and theism. Emotionally too they are beneficial to different temperaments. The problem, however, arises when we are to decide which of the alternatives we are to follow; and in fact we want to know whether we are devotional or intellectual by temperament. Here, of course, the difficulty is real. From discussion and experience, we feel, it will be best to practise both the attitudes of self-negation and self-expansion in accordance with the preponderance of moods we pass through. These may regularly be practised daily also in different times. After some time, generally a particular attitude is found to be our special one and thenceforward the decision becomes easy. Till then a sort of a dichotomy in thought and approach may remain. But a clear understanding of the practical implications and philosophical background will free us from serious cleavage of thought, current in the religious traditions for so many centuries. In olden days aspirants of different systems did not meet much except for establishing the supremacy

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of their particular method, but nowadays with the study of comparative religions, we sometimes move off from our one-pointed devotion. But this we hope will lead to liberalism and each method will enrich the other by complementing it. Life is an organic whole. Different attitudes and feelings are the nature of every man. So these could all be practised usefully to fulfil each other. Jnana, bhakti, yoga and karma, as Swamiji has pointed out, are complementary and not contradictory. Sri Ramakrishna's life shows that in one life these can be combined. This moreover, Swamiji thought, makes for a perfect character, which he described as the Ramakrishna-mould. Swami Vivekananda presented this as an ideal for the modern age. We do hope by a judicious combination, at least in the beginning, a more perfect and satisfying character can be formed, which ultimately is the test of the validity and usefulness of all disciplines.

ALAMBAZAR MATH

And the Inception of the Vow of Service

(Continued from the previous issue)

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Bhatpara

I had no acquaintances then at Bhatpara. I offered myself as a guest of Pandit Yajnapati Vidyaratna. He took me with great respect. Gradually I picked up acquaintance with Sri Priya Nath Tattwaratna, elder brother of Pandit Pramathanath Tarkabhusan and the Court-Pandit of the Prince of Banaras, Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna, Pandit Krishnapada Nyayaratna, Head Pandit of Uttarpara High School, and other Pandits. They heartily approved of our plan for the introduction of Vedic learning and requested us to be pioneers in the field. They promised to send their boys for Vedic education. They expressed the opinion that real learning consisted in Vedic culture and not in a desultory form of studies and that there could be no progress for the country, the nation and society through the present system of education. Their artlessness and scholarly ways charmed me. I had a misgiving first as to what their idea was about the Master, how they looked upon Swami Vivekananda and how they would take me. But I saw that at the mere mention of the Master's name they bowed down their heads in reverence and called him the Saviour of the fallen. About Swamiji they said, 'He is a genius in reality, a great soul, he has brightened the face of the country. Still we would keep him aloof as he has gone to the West and eaten any food he got.'

Many of the Pandits invited me to their houses and were very hospitable. I remember well that at the house of Sri Panchanan Tarkaratna before I was served my meal they placed in my hand Tulasi leaves and Ganga water uttering Mantras and thus purified me as the Mahratta Brahmans do. At the house of Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya, Professor of Sanskrit, Muir College, Allahabad, his relatives took me very kindly. I had picked up acquaintance with Pandit Adityaram in the Uttarakhanda. Then I spent a night at his Allahabad residence. In the evening I sat spell-bound to hear the learned dissertations of the famous Pandits, Sivachandra Tarkaratna and others on Sanskrit poetry, literature, rhetoric and other subjects. In the blessed company of the Pandits I spent a few days, the memory of which still gladdens my heart.

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From my boyhood I knew Pandit Madhusudan Smritiratna of Bhatpara. Now at Bhatpara I heard that he had died. I talked with his eldest son, Pandit Hrishikesh Sastri, Professor, Sanskrit College. He was then editor of the Sanskrit monthly *Vidyodaya*. There was no other Sanskrit monthly then in Bengal. Incidentally I told him of an old event in Baranagar and he was very glad to hear it. At Baranagar Math I heard from Ramakrishnananda that Kailas Thakurda (grandfather) of Baranagar was pensioned off from Government service and lived a retired life at Banaras. Occasionally he came home and was a daily visitor at the Math. He was a man of a jovial temperament and had great respect for the inmates of the Math. One day he came to the Math and said to Ramakrishnananda, 'My friend, from man you have been raised to gods but I have been degraded to a caterpillar (with hundred legs).'

'How is that, grandfather,' said Ramakrishnananda, 'you are fortunate in having both means and offspring, why do you say so?'

'Hear me, my friend,' said the grandfather, 'hear how I have been metamorphosed into a caterpillar. When I was in the single state I had two legs. After marriage I became a quadruped. When grandchildren filled the home my legs could not be counted as in the case of the caterpillar. After the day's office work I have a change and with the vessels for service before me and the sacred thread wound round the finger I sit to meditate on my Deity when my darling grandchild comes and hangs on my neck with "grand papa" on his lips and my heart shrivels into a caterpillar!'

At his words our respect for him increased. As the Sastri heard this he said, 'Nicely spoken. I must translate it and publish in my *Vidyodaya*.'

Since then for a very long time a copy of the *Vidyodaya* would reach our Alambazar Math regularly. Ramakrishnananda found joy in reading it.

The *Sayings of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna Dev* compiled by Babu Suresh Chandra Dutta contained 595 teachings of the Master. No other book on the Master had preceded it. At the time of rest after dinner Swami Ramakrishnananda would every day render a few sayings from the Book into the Sanskrit Anustup metre and send the same for publication in the *Vidyodaya*. Many of the editions of the monthly contained the sayings of the Master.

On my proposal to start a Vedic school at Bhatpara, the Pandits said, 'Our disciple Som Babu has agreed to donate Rs. 5,000 for the purpose.' Further they said that they would hand over the sum to us if we made an attempt to found a Vedic school. But unfortunately all this ended in smoke. Afterwards we learnt that this sum helped in founding the existing High School at Bhatpara.

The Pandits showed me the cottage on the Ganga where Isan Babu, a noted devotee of the Master, had stayed for some time and performed Purascharana of the Gayatri (making the Gayatri Mantra living). Pandit Sivachandra Sarvabhauma was then principal of Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore's Sanskrit College at Mulajore. I went to see that college and spent a night there. In the evening I went to see the image of Mother Brahmamayi, installed by Maharaja Tagore. As I bowed down and sat before the Mother, the priests came and sat round me. Learning that I was a devotee of the Master, they talked with respect. They were all Brahmins of Sripur Kamarpukur (birthplace of the Master). With wonder I heard from them many an account of the boyhood of the Master, not heard before. With one voice they, in regret and reverence, said, 'Sir, surely we are to be pitied. We lived in the same village with him, saw with our own eyes his boyish games, still we could not realise his divinity, we could not know him. Now we cannot make out whether he was a heavenly being, a kinnara (a demi-god) or God Himself. Alas! the fire of repentance now burns

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us. Oh, how blessed are you, sirs! He has revealed himself to you, how fortunate!'

Chinsurah

From Mulajore I came back to Bhatpara. Then in the company of Pandits Priyanath Tattwaratna, Panchanan Tarkaratna, Krishnapada Nyayaratna and others I went to the residence of the 'England-returned' Phanindranath Mukherjee, Professor of Chemistry, Hooghly college, at Chinsurah and had a talk with him. From the Pandits he learnt particulars about me and said, 'I have no idea about the religion preached by Swami Vivekananda, but I know that every Indian is grateful to him as he has glorified India in the West.' Then I went to Bhudeb Babu's house and met his only surviving son Mukundadeb Babu. I stayed on at Bhudeb Babu's house. The Pandits went back home. I had a mind to stay at Bhatpara a little longer, but could not do so. I said to Mukunda Babu, 'On hearing of your Vedic school in the newspapers I have come to see it.' 'Ours is a Vedic school merely in name,' said he, 'in reality some scholars are given stipends and they study the current branches of Sanskrit learning — Vedanta, Philosophy, Nyaya, Literature etc.' Then he introduced me to the Principal of the school. The latter was formerly the Court-Pandit of the Maharaja of Burdwan. 'Who is there fit to teach the Vedas?' asked Mukunda Babu I told him of Pandit Satyavrata Samasrami of Calcutta. On hearing this Mukunda Babu asked the Principal to go to Samasrami twice a week and study the Vedas. 'This arrangement will keep the memory of your visit to our place ever fresh,' said he.

Let me state here things to show what a patriot Bhudeb Babu was. Long before the Swadeshi movement, cloth produced indigenously was in use in his house. They wrote with home-made tin pens or quill pens instead of steel pens. No articles of foreign make except newly published books and medicines were in use there. It is to be noted that he was then a School Inspector under the Education Department.

I was glad to see the method of education he had introduced. Gobinda Babu and Mukunda Babu had many sons of a tender age. Every day in the morning they began their lessons by standing in a row and reciting 'Dasavatara Stotram' of Jayadeva Goswami. Another thing is to be noted here. On one side of his parlour the boys of the house did their lessons with an undivided mind. In that very room sat Bhudeb Babu engaged in discussions of various sorts with his contemporary writers. They cut jokes off and on. But such was his personality that in the midst of all these the boys did their lessons attentively.

Since then Mukunda Babu regularly sent a copy of his *Education Gazette* to our Math for a good length of time.

Naihati

While I was at Bhudeb Babu's house there came Meghanad Bhattacharji, Professor of Physics, Jaipur Maharaj College. We had become intimate at Jaipur. He had come home on leave. On finding me here he took me to his home at Naihati. He was a younger brother of Pandit Haraprasad Sastri. Sastri lived there with his family in a separate house.

For some ten days I was with Meghanad Babu. I spent much of my time in discussions on historical topics with Sastri. He found joy in his discussions with me.

Here a Brahman scholar did research work on the 'Legends of Dharma Thakur in Bengal' under the Asiatic Society. He worked under the Sastri. The Sastri was of opinion that the Buddhistic Trinity 'Buddha, Dharma and Sangha' are still worshipped in the name of Dharma Thakur among the common people in Bengal. So the Buddhistic religion has not yet become totally obsolete in Bengal.

This very collector of anecdotes on Dharma Thakur was once, by a miracle, my saviour

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in a Murshidabad village, when some infuriated villagers tried to kill me with their clubs.*

It was at the Sastri's place that I met Pandit Bahuvallabh Sastri, a student of Pandit Sivakumar Sastri of Banaras. Every day in the morning he came to Naihati from Calcutta. Haraprasad Sastri read the grammar of Panini with him. Bahuvallabh Sastri was versed in the Mahabhasya. One day I heard him explain texts from the Mahabhasya and was charmed by his scholarship. His exposition of such an intricate subject rendered it as lucid as a folklore. I had a mind to hear from him the interpretation of the whole Mahabhasya but it could not be.

Swami Vivekananda would say, 'If one got by heart the aphorisms of Panini and then heard from a learned scholar an explanation of the Mahabhasya, it would be possible for one to compile grammatical treatises like *Siddhanta Kaumudi, Manorama* and *Sarala*.' Haraprasad Sastri presented to our Math library some auxiliary books like *Parimala*. He was then Professor of Sanskrit at the Presidency College.

From Naihati I returned to the Math. It was summer. One day Swami Sivananda, Turiyananda and myself were coming back to our Math after our ablution in the Ganga at Lochan Ghosh's ghat at Alambazar when we found an old woman lying unconscious at the Alambazar crossing. Cholera was then raging at Dakshineswar, Ariadaha and other places. This old woman was a victim of that fell disease. Nobody could say wherefrom she had come. I procured a clean cloth, made her wear it and took her to Baranagar Police Station in a bullock cart. The people there sent her to Campbell Hospital and I returned to the Math. As I went upstairs I found Swami Sivananda at the door. 'You must be fumigated first,' said he, and made me change my clothes. A few days after this incident I went to Khardaha.

(To be continued)

* When the Swami (the writer) started relief work in Murshidabad, he had to tour about in the villages in search of orphans. Rumour now spread in the villages that wicked people were about, they would lift boys to be transported to Mauritius Island. They took the Swami as one such and chased him with deadly weapons. For fear of life the Swami took refuge in this Brahman's house and was saved by him.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

It is beyond the competence of any one with no element of greatness in himself to comprehend or give fitting expression to the message of the great Swami Vivekananda. As in all Prophets and Seers there is a touch of the infinite in the Swami. At the same time the principle for which he stood, which he articulated in all his thundering orations and for implementing which he dedicated his whole life and stupendous powers stands out in luminous clarity and unmistakable prominence. Some attempt can be made, however meagre and feeble, to re-capture this central principle in his message and dwell on its weighty significance.

This essential message may be named the message of strength. The Swami was himself strength and vitality incarnate and imparted through his words of fire boundless power and energy.

II. The nature of the strength he preached has to be precisely determined for he had a very definite notion of it. Physical strength was undoubtedly a part of it according to him. He demanded muscles of iron and nerves of steel in his followers. Economic well-being constituted another essential element; poverty and economic misery moved him to passionate outbursts. Even religion loses its value if it does not emancipate the nation from economic

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evils. 'As long as there is even a single dog starving in my country, the whole of my religion would lie in feeding it'. Intellectual power was the third factor in the composition of strength. Swami Vivekananda had a distinct philosophy of Education. Education for him meant the liberation of the inexhaustible inner potentialities of man. Acquisition of information was not for him the function of Education. The development of creative personality through concentration and character were the ideals of education for him. Learning is positive self-realization through an integrated intellect and devoted will. Finally and ultimately strength meant for Swami Vivekananda, the effective recovery and manifestation of the 'Atman' in man. The real element in the making of man is the Atman and Atman is the reservoir of infinite power and splendour. Strength born of the Atman is true strength. The release of the Atman to the full glory of its expansion is the fundamental strength. This is the self dehypnotisation that the Swami preached. All human degradation lies in the forgetting of the Atman. The only original sin of man is the ignorance of the Atman, the eternal substance in the being of man. The goal and destiny of man is freedom and freedom signifies the attainment of the consciousness of the infinite Atman. Spirituality is not a weak whimpering resignation and self-abnegation but a vital self-assertion of the nmost essence of the self. Strength born of anything less than the Atman is ephemeral and illusory and is based on the superstition of the Anatman.

True spirituality is strength and true strength is spiritual is an equation we owe to Swami Vivekananda. He is resurrecting for us the two complimentary insights of the Upanishads: '*Nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyah*' '*Ātmanā vindate vīryam.*'

III. It is needless to emphasize that this philosophy of strength has nothing in common with the glorification of mere force and violence. It is not destructive, it is power making for peace and selfless devotion to the common good. Swami Vivekananda goes to the extent of saying that all inhumanity and selfishness are forms of weakness. 'We lie, steal, kill and commit other crimes, because we are weak'. The strength of his conception is a tremendous ethical force, generating social harmony and inspiring heroic self-sacrifice.

IV. It is sometimes hinted that the message of Swami Vivekananda has no contemporary significance. It is suggested that it has served its historic purpose and has ceased to be of relevance to our times. In short it is held that it is a spent force. Such a view is truly surprising. The evils that called forth the liberating gospel of the Swamiji are not extinct. We have not eliminated all the forms of weakness. We are politically free. But are we emancipated from pettiness of spirit and deterioration of national character? Are we economically, intellectually as strong as he wished? What of spiritual strength? It is as much a need, a crying need today, as it was sixty years ago. The vices that made us lose our freedom in the past are operative again and the ideals for realising which political freedom is a means are yet unrealized and remote. There is only one way of superseding the message of strength and that by perfection of strength. Unhappily we have not reached that state either as individuals or as a nation. Inertia and pettiness are not yet dead and our Atman is not yet aroused into fullness of actuality. There is no point in this complacency. Let us not block the path of progress by such disastrous illusions.

V. Now to return to the message of Swami Vivekananda. We have to develop strength of his conception. Swami Vivekananda has delineated for us in bold and profound outlines the methods to be pursued for achieving freedom and strength. They are the four yogas, Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and Raja yoga. I venture to think the systematic formulation of these yogas in clear relief is decidedly an original contribution of Swamiji. It is true they are there in the Gita and other scriptures. But something like a science of these pathways to self-realization was shaped for the first time now. The scheme of the four yogas does

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justice to the several dimensions of human personality and Swamiji took care to see the inner logic of all the four and worked out their final co-ordination. Jnanayoga is philosophical reflection aiming at the discrimination of the real and the apparent. It sees the reality of the external world in the cosmic spirit, the 'Brahman' and the reality of man in the 'Atman', the essential Self in man. It culminates in the discovery of the identity of Brahman and Atman. Bhaktiyoga consists in the cultivation of love and adoration towards the supreme reality and culminates in the final integration of the individual with the absolute through the power of 'love supreme'. Karmayoga is ethical endeavour through dedicated action. It culminates in the achievement of impersonality and universality. This losing of the little self for the self universal, this consecration of individual exertion for universal life is freedom or mukti. Our real self is absolute, universal and cosmic; selfless activity brings into manifestation this inner reality of man and destroys the illusion of particularity. Rajayoga is the perfecting of the cognitive machinery so as to gain an immediate apprehension of the real and the absolute Atman. It is such apprehension that is the basis of all religions and it is the goal of all religious life. Through Rajayoga, the Atman passes from the status of a dogma to that of a fact, and faith is transmuted into perception. It is the scientific validation of spiritual truth.

Each of these methods can be self-sufficient and can also be pursued together with the others. It is sheer historical justice to recognize that Swami Vivekananda is the first philosopher of our country to formulate, systematize and co-ordinate these methods of spiritual life with equal zeal with regard to each and with an eye to their final synthesis in practice. He worked out to perfection the design implicit in the Gita. It is his outstanding contribution to Indian thought.

VI. There is yet another service of the Swamiji that demands adequate recognition. He was no mere revivalist simply restating the conventional theory of *yogas*. In his formulation, they acquire an elevation. There is creative rethinking, and the older methods of realization emerge transfigured with a new beauty and added power. Certain limitations and undesirable accretions had gathered round these in the older formulations. Swami Vivekananda purified them in his statement. They shine forth in all their natural depth and vastness of import.

Jnanayoga in its older formulations was invariably coupled with sannyasa or renunciation. It was an old and well-established idea that the highest truth was discoverable only through the complete dedication. The principle is illustrated in the career of Bhagavan Buddha. Swami Vivekananda accepted the principle but breathed into sannyasa a fresh and positive meaning. It was not mere renunciation but renunciation and service. The ideal of sannyasa gets in his hand a profoundly humanitarian connotation. It is this interpretation that has conferred on the order of monks founded by him all the uniquely constructive character it possesses. Jnanayoga for Swami Vivekananda is no mere contemplation in solitude and retirement but the pursuit of knowledge in and through the most ardent and dynamic social service. Loka Sangraha gets welded into the very substance of the contemplative life. Sannyasa is thus transformed into a positive social force. The apparently negative virtue of renunciation is thus reshaped into an expansive ideal of energetic action.

Action or karma itself received an enlarged and universalized meaning in the new version of Karmayoga. It no longer signified ritual action or mere conformity to the conventional code of morals. The concept of Swadharma was extricated from the conservative varnadharma based on mere birth and tradition. Karma in its new significance means humanitarian action in accordance with one's aptitude and ability and disinterestedness becomes the criterion for evaluating inherited customs and codes themselves. The spirit of dedication that should inspire social morality becomes a revolutionary force. This is a signal contribution, for as understood of old Karmayoga

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might simply mean ritualism and uncomplaining submission to the existing social order. The ideas of privilege and social hierarchy are abandoned and a powerful conception of duty emerges in consequence. Society should be so shaped and reordered that the highest ideals must be capable of realization in it.

Similar is the effect of the reconstruction of Bhaktiyoga. The essence of the religion of love is sublime. But in the history of Indian religion Bhaktiyoga has tended to degenerate into fanaticism and sectarianism. Cults, theologies and narrow mythological conceptions of the Deity got blended with the Universal gospel of love. In Swami Vivekananda's formulation of Bhakti all its intensity is maintained but there is a liberating universality. For the first time in the history of the Bhakti movement sectarianism is transcended and the object of devout adoration is conceived in utmost catholicity of spirit. Such a release of Bhakti from its narrow moulds enhances its power and scope, for fanaticism is fundamentally a species of weakness. Further, Bhaktiyoga has a tendency to degenerate in another aspect. It easily becomes mere sentimentalism and emotionalism giving rise to the attitude of self-abasement. The object of devotion is also pictured in soft and anthropomorphic colours. Swami Vivekananda sharply reacted to these aberrations. He preached the gospel of heroic love, which includes a triumphant faith in oneself and a readiness to adore even the most destructive manifestations of the Deity. Bhakti without the weakening self-abasement and Bhakti towards God, the terrible, is an altogether new and invigorating mode of piety. In this form Love of God becomes an irresistable species of strength and vitality.

Rajayoga has a fine inspiration behind it and brings into spiritual life a certain method and technique. But unfortunately in its conventional setting it got mixed up with occultism and mystery-mongering and became the arena of superstitions and miracles. Attainment of supernormal powers that could be utilised even for inferior ends of life became the chief interest in Yoga. Swami Vivekananda fought down this tendency and rescued Rajayoga from its degrading associations. He set forth its principles in all their scientific and philosophical purity and demonstrated its supreme function in practical spirituality. This spiritualization of yoga, its elevation from the realm of magic to that of science is one of his greatest services.

VII. Thus in all his reaffirmations Swami Vivekananda purified and perfected what he revived. There is both conservation and enrichment in all his versions of older principles. Presented in this fashion his gospel of strength and the methods of attaining it become the philosophy of New Vedanta combining the essential wisdom of the ancients with the rational and humanitarian temper of the best in modern thought. It is difficult to believe that we as individuals and as a nation can achieve anything of consequence without living upto the glorious heritage of Swami Vivekananda. May his spirit guide us.

PRAYER

K. B. SITARAMAYYA

Peace of mind and ease of heart,
Release of will from passion's hold,
For these alone, I seek Thy aid,
Lead me, my God, and be my Guide.

To think of Thee and feel for Thee,
To make Thy will all my own,
For these alone, I seek Thy aid,
Lead me, my God, and be my Guide.

No worldly pleasures do I need,
To be Thy own is all my greed,
For these alone, I seek Thy aid,
Lead me, my God, and be my Guide.

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THE THEISM OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

RAMA SHANKER SRIVASTAVA

Tagore is essentially a poet, and it is from his poetry that we derive his philosophy. Though poetry is not philosophy, we have the poems surcharged with deep thought. But hardly do we find a systematic and reasoned discourse with the truths well woven in a web. A logical consistent structure of philosophical thought is lacking in the writings of Tagore. He experiences flashes of intuition and expresses them in poems but he does not take pains to develop a systematic theory. He avoids the difficult road of knowledge and leaves to us sermons, pieces of inspiration and great eternal truths. That is why Edward J. Thompson comments :

> 'There goes a certain mental laziness about him. We often feel that there is a slackness somewhere probably at the very spring of thought and conception. He has been embordering the margins of truth.' [1]

Tagore avoids elucidating a clear cut conception of God. There is no categorical statement in which he explicitly and openly advocates theism. He is essentially a theistic philosopher but he does not discard the absolutistic view. He often lapses into the absolutism, with the result that Dr Radhakrishnan and Dr S. N. Das Gupta call him an absolutistic thinker whereas Dr D. M. Datta calls him a theist. Dr Datta observes :

> 'Rabindranath was temperamentally opposed to puritanism, asceticism, and impersonal absolutism. He rather chose to emphasise like the Vaishnava those aspects of the Upanishads which taught that the finites were created by the Infinite out of its own endless joy of love, and they are, therefore, not illusory but real.' [2]

We observe in this connection that the critics who charge Tagore for vacillation are wholly mistaken. Tagore is not one who leaves this crucial point, about the personal or impersonal nature of God, in the lurch or undecided. Rabindranath stands as a matter of fact, for synthesis of personal and impersonal aspects of God. He assimilates both theism and absolutism in his exalted philosophy. Along with his philosophy we find that the characteristic of the great contemporary Indian philosophers, viz., Dr Radhakrishnan, Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo lies in accepting both the theistic and the absolutistic aspects of God as real, and in evolving synthetic systems of philosophy. They all develop different systems of thought but they incorporate both the aspects of the Infinite. One takes the theistic aspect as merely empirical and the absolutistic aspects as real, the other conceives both the theism and absolutism as real, and still some others propound the Reality as a concrete universal or a positive being.

Though Tagore synthesises theism with absolutism, he is most concerned with God, and takes the Absolute as His secondary aspect. It is to be noted that Tagore has not mentioned the word, 'Absolute', in *The Religion of Man* even once. God has two aspects — personal and impersonal. The impersonal aspect of God is the Absolute. But it is not a void or an abstract Reality as Sankara conceives. Tagore denounces the empty Absolute of the Advaitins, who reduce the world to a chimera.

The personal aspect of God is greater than His impersonal aspect. God is greater than the absolute. God is not the manifestation of the impersonal Absolute, rather He is the Reality. The Absolute is His secondary aspect. Most Indian thinkers take God as empirical, ephemeral and the finite aspect of the Absolute. Tagore, on the contrary, conceives God to be the supreme Person who is absolutely perfect, absolutely omniscient, absolutely omnipotent,

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[1] *Rabindranath Tagore: His Life and Works*, Introduction.

[2] *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 527, published by the University of Calcutta, 1950.

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absolutely kind and absolute in all His powers, qualities and existence. God is the Absolute in an absolutely absolute way.

The question emerges, what is personality considered in the infinite sense? Personality is not necessarily a finite concept. 'Personality,' observes Dr Merz, 'always impresses us as the most powerful instance in individual existence.'[3] If the Reality is endowed with the will and self-determination, it has a personality. An infinite Personality means that the constitution of Reality is such that it has infinite will, infinite power, infinite bliss and infinite goodness. These are not the qualities but the very constitution of Reality.

To elucidate Tagore's view, we may distinguish the nature of personality as conceived by, personality in God, personality of God and personal God. The personality in God refers to one included in the Absolute. Within the Absolute, we have the personality. Personality is not predictable of the whole, and the Absolute as impersonal and infinite comprehends the personal and finite God. The personality of God refers to God as the Supreme with infinite powers. But these powers are as attributes of God and do not belong to His constitution. The qualities of omniscience, omnipotence, justice, creatorship, etc., are His ultimate nature. In contrast to the above two conceptions, Rabindranath speaks of personal God, which suggests that the personality is not a quality of the Absolute but is the very being of God. As a being endowed with self-will has personality, God has self-will and self-determination. The powers, viz., omniscience, omnipotence, creatorship, etc., are the elements in the very being of God.

Personality, for Tagore, conveys the sense of transcendental unity of all finite beings. Like Hegel, Tagore conceives God as a unity comprehending all finite existences. Whereas men have imperfect personalities, God alone has the perfect personality. Perfect personality is, as Lotze conceives, in God only, and finite personalities are the manifestations of the Divine. 'Reality,' Rabindranath observes, 'can be regarded as Personality acting upon personalities through incessant manifestations.'[4]

The theism of Vaishnavism, Christianity and Brahmosamaj has deeply influenced Tagore's philosophy. Though he adheres to the theistic conception, he also accepts the impersonal aspect of God. But Absolute, the impersonal God is not transitory and empirical, it is a positive, concrete and universal Reality. P. T. Raju observes:

> 'Tagore is much influenced by Vaishnavism, and he is a Vaishnava in his own way. He calls His Supreme Person Advaitam and his philosophy is a sort of Vaishnava Advaita or an Advaita in which, bhakti or love plays the chief role. He does not seem to have any logical objection to the impersonal Absolute of Sankara.'[5]

God is the Supreme Person, who manifests His impersonal aspect. If *The Religion of Man, Gitanjali, Personality* and *Creative Unity* constitute the kernel of Tagore's thought, God, the Man supreme is the ultimate Reality of the Universe. Tagore says:

> 'As our religion can only have its significance in this phenomenal world comprehended by our human self, the Absolute conception of Brahman is outside the subject of my discussion. What I have tried to bring out in this book is the fact that whatever name may have been given to the divine Reality, it has found its highest place in the history of our religion owing to its human character, giving meaning to the ideas of sin and sanctity, and offering an eternal background to all the ideals of perfection which have their harmony in man's own nature.'[6]

In devotion, surrender, disinterested works, art, science and poetry, an individual has to make explicit, open and revealed his Divine Personality. As Tagore says:

> 'The individual man must exist for Man the Great, and must express him in disinterested works, in science and philosophy, in literature and arts, in science and worship. This is his religion

[3] *Religion and Science*, p. 174.

[4] Quoted in V. S. Narvane's book, *Rabindranath Tagore—A Philosophical Study*, p. 74.

[5] *The Idealistic Thought of India*, p. 324, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1953.

[6] *The Religion of Man*, p. 117, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, Third impression, 1949.

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which is working in the heart of all his religions in various names and forms.'[7]

It is evident, therefore, that the ultimate Reality is the Supreme Divine Person in Tagore's philosophy.

God is essentially human in nature, the concrete form is more perfect than the abstract. Throughout *Gitanjali,* we find that God has been conceived as a human being. Though Tagore gives us an anthropomorphic conception of God, there is nothing wrong in this view. Anthropomorphism is natural to man so long as man is man. We cannot conceive of God except as a divine Person. For Tagore, God is a friend. He says, 'Drunk with the joy of singing, I forget myself and call thee friend who art my lord.'[8] The very theme of *The Religion of Man* is the humanisation of God and the divinisation of man. He writes :

'I felt that I had found my religion at last, the religion of Man, in which the infinite became defined in humanity and came close to me so as to need my love and co-operation. This idea of mine found at a later date its expression in my poems, Jivan Devata, the Lord of my life.'[9]

To conceive of the Absolute is to accept the nothingness of the selves. God in that conception becomes purely free and indeterminate.

[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Gitanjali,* verse 11.
[9] *The Religion of Man,* p. 96.

If God is not bound with selves and nature, He becomes passive, inert and dead existence. God is a dynamic reality because He is bound with the innumerable selves that inhabit the cosmos. To conceive of the selves as independent and real, is to reject the Absolute, God is bound with the selves and is yet a free personality. It is because of these reasons that Tagore does not accept the absolutistic position. He says :

'In India, there are those whose endeavour is to merge completely their personal self in an impersonal entity which is without any quality or definition; to reach a condition wherein mind becomes perfectly blank, losing all its activities. Those who claim the right to speak about it say that this is the purest state of consciousness, it is all joy without any object or content. This is considered to be the ultimate end of Yoga, the cult of union, thus completely to identify one's being with the infinite being who is beyond all thoughts and words. Such realisation of a transcendental consciousness, accompanied by a perfect sense of bliss, is a time-honoured tradition in our country carrying in it the positive evidence which cannot be denied by any argument or refutation. Without disputing the truth, I maintain that it may be valuable as great psychological experience but all the same it is not religion, even as the knowledge of the ultimate state of atom is of no use to an artist who deals in images in which atoms have taken part.'[10]

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 117.

MOTHER

LOKU GEHANI

Thou art the symbol of sacrifice,
A poem of piety;
I dedicate to thee my life :
And invoke strength from thee to do my duty.

I bow to thee.
Thou art the giver of life and love.
Oh ! Mother ! Take me unto thee ;
And lift me from here to heaven above.

Thy love is pure, simple and sublime,
It sustains the world, enriches the art.
Thou know not the bounds of space and time,
Mother ! Selfish and greedy thou art not.

It is thou, the mother that shines
In a woman. The deep affection of the breast
That to humans by God has been blessed
Is thy nature. In thy heart all love lies.

Again, and again, I bow to thee,
Oh ! Mother ! Take me unto thee !

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TAGORE'S PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

Tagore has not written any formal treatises on philosophy. He was primarily a poet and a dramatist but an integral and original mind like his, rooted in the Indian soil which is the home of philosophy, has necessarily a philosophy of its own. He was by temperament a seer, a sage, a saint. He saw things beneath, beyond, above. Poets and philosophers see things beyond mortal ken and tell us what they see. Sri Shankaracharya who is a supreme seer and world-philosopher and who is also a supreme poet (though his poetry was overshadowed by his philosophy) always explains the word kavi (poet) as meaning krānta-darsi (one who sees far beneath and beyond and above the surface of things). In the *Purusha Sookta* the Vedic seer says: 'I have seen the great Purusha (Divine Being) shining beyond all darkness.' The first verse in the *Isavasya Upanishad,* of which Tagore was very fond and which he regarded as the very summit of philosophy and religion, says: '*Isavasyam idam sarvam*' (all this is indwelt and enveloped and transcended by God). Tagore enjoyed his visions of the Eternal Spirit and has recorded them. That record is his philosophy.

In his great work entitled *Personality* he gives us his visions of Man and Nature and sees and tells us the essence of both. Animals and birds also have knowledge but their knowledge is limited to the attainment of food and shelter. They also mate and bring forth their young ones but their love is limited by their casual and sporadic sexual and family life. But man pursues knowledge for the sake of knowledge and is full of an ethereal and restless and illimitable passion for widening the bounds of love till he passes from one circle to another in a concentric series of circles viz. country, nation, humanity, God. Tagore says:

> 'But man has a surplus where he can proudly assert that knowledge is for the sake of knowledge. There he has the pure enjoyment of his knowledge, because here knowledge is freedom. Upon this fund of surplus his science and philosophy thrive.'

He says further that man can never be content with 'the altruism of parenthood, the altruism of the herd and the hive'. Man loves goodness for the sake of goodness. Tagore says:

> 'And upon this wealth of goodness — where honesty is not valued for being the best policy, but because it can afford to go against all policies — man's ethics are founded.'

Man's joy is not confined to his getting what is useful to him. He loves Beauty for its own sake. Tagore says:

> 'Man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of Art, for man's civilisation is built upon this surplus.'

In philosophy and religion man seeks the Eternal Realities of which Art is the beautiful outer expression. The temple must be worthy of the Deity and the Deity should irradiate the temple by the 'light that never was on sea or land'.

That is why in Tagore's eyes Nature and Man and God are inter-connected and interblended. They are not mere bloodless abstractions. Truth and Goodness and Beauty are a unity in trinity and a trinity in unity. He says:

> 'Our emotions are the gastric juices which transform this world of appearances into the more intimate world of sentiments.'

The word Rasa means both the enjoyment of Beauty and the enjoyment of Truth. Aesthetics and metaphysics are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Tagore says:

> 'The plainest language is needed when I have to say what I know about a rose, but to say what I feel about a rose is different . . . Whenever heart is fully awakened in love, or in other great emotions, our personality is at its flood tide.'

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Thus we can appreciate and enjoy Tagore's philosophy only when we blend Science and Poetry and Philosophy and melt into unity both the outer Reality and Beauty and the Inner Reality and Beauty. He reconciles Science and Philosophy and Religion in an original and inimitable manner. Our concepts of Space and Time are relative but the Absolute is not something totally beyond — a mere abstraction and nothing more. It is immanent in the Relative and is yet transcendent. It is within, above, beyond. He says that each individual sun or star is rushing at an incredible speed and that the whole world of suns and stars is 'a chain of diamonds hanging on the neck of the God of Silence.' He says :

> 'The variety of creation is due to the mind seeing different phenomena in different foci of time and space.' (*Personality*, pp. 46, 47.)

Thus time and space and causation are mental limitations of the Infinite and Eternal Bliss which is freedom and love. As I have observed in my book on Tagore :

> 'The white light of the Supreme is refracted through the prism of the mind into the triplicity of time and space and causation which comprise the endless play of forms and names in the totality of things.'

According to Tagore *avidya* or nescience is a limited and relative view of Truth whereas we must have an infinite and absolute vision and experience and realisation of Truth. He says :

> 'When this obstruction which is ignorance is removed, then only is the eyelid drawn up which is no loss to the eye.' (*Sadhana*, p. 72.)

Thus Nature, according to Tagore is a manifestation of the Divine, and the human soul is an even higher manifestation of the Divine. God is Satchidananda (Being-Self-Conscious-Bliss). These viz. *Sat, Chit* and *Ananda* — are not three separate things but are a Triune Unity. In itself it is beyond Name and Form. But it manifests itself as Name and Form. Manifestation is not a mere dream or hallucination or mirage or self-stultification. It is its own self-limitation in the plane of the Relative. The unseen aqueous vapour and mist and rain and snow and iceberg are really one in essence.

It is this realisation that is the essence of Tagore's philosophy. It may not be exactly the Advaita or Vishistadvaita or Dvaita system of philosophy. I would prefer to call it Purnadvaita (the Full Infinite Oneness). That is why Tagore does not run into the world or run away from the world. He is in the world and of the world and yet beyond and above the world. Many persons are puzzled by such an attitude and outlook but he does not mind their perplexity.

Thus to Tagore 'Joy is at the root of all creation' (*Sadhana*, p. 117). We must transcend the ego or self and realise the soul. The soul realises itself by realising its unity with other souls and with the infinite Soul of all. Nature, Soul and God are three — nay, they are one. Tagore says :

> 'Its very essence is unity. It can only find itself by unifying itself with others and only then has its joy' (*Sadhana*, p. 27). 'To know our soul apart from the self is the first step towards the realisation of the supreme deliverance' (*Sadhana*, p. 30).

Man's glory is 'the surrender of his self to be tuned for the music of the soul' (*Personality*, p. 105). Man is finite if we view him as body or mind, but he is infinite if we view him as soul. God is the king of the world but He is also the Lover of the Soul which is the Beloved. Essentially the Lover and the Beloved are one. 'Man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by more and more union with the All' (*Sadhana*, pp. 60, 61). Nay, the soul is a form of God's joy (*Sadhana*, p. 81).

Thus Tagore does not and cannot and will not negate God or Soul or Universe because they are one yet three — three yet one. The universe is the expression of God's self-creative bliss.

> 'Its form is in law but its spirit is in beauty' (*Sadhana*, p. 98). 'Law is the first step towards freedom, and beauty is the complete liberation

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which stands on the pedestal of law. Beauty harmonises in itself the limit and the beyond, the law and the liberty' (*Sadhana*, pp. 98, 99).

In its outer life a flower is a fact or an event; but in itself it is a messenger from God to Soul. Thus God is Law in Nature and Love in the heart.

Many persons who are in a hurry and cannot pause and meditate and realise may feel puzzled and angry by such a view of Truth and may prefer the clear-cut philosophical data in various systems of philosophy. But Tagore goes above the systems to the source of all the systems. To him God is Being, Power, Personality — three in one and yet one in three. God is Immanent and Transcendent, though some systems confine him to Immanence or Manifestation or Transcendence. It does not matter much to him whether you call his view Pantheism or Theism or Trans-Theism. God is in all, is the all, is beyond the all. He is hidden in the universe; He is the Universe; He transcends the Universe. In the language of the *Purusha Sukta*: '*Antar bahischa tat sarvam vyapya Narayanah sthitah*' (God is within everything, is beyond everything, in everything). Tagore says:

'The attitude of the God-conscious man of the Upanishad towards the universe is one of a deep feeling of adoration. His object of worship is present everywhere.'

Tagore thus saw God everywhere, in everything. Where there was Beauty there was God. Where there was Goodness there was God. Where there was Truth there was God. He sought these eternal values and other allied eternal values such as unselfishness, compassion, self-abnegation, heroism etc. He did not care for mere renunciation for its own sake. There can be a divine unselfish enjoyment just as there can be a divine unselfish renunciation. To Tagore God as Person is as real as the Impersonal Absolute. God in the road-mender and the stone-breaker is not less real than God in temple or church or mosque. In his great symbolic drama *The King of the Dark Chamber* Surangama is not able to perceive the king so long as she seeks him in the outer world alone but she realises him in love in the dark chamber of the heart. Tagore stresses Yajnavalkya's teaching in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that the father loves the son because of the God in the son. The love of God is the essence of all essences. Tagore says:

'He who wants to do good knocks at the gate, he who loves finds the gate, open' (*Stray Birds*, p. 83).

Many students of Tagore feel bewildered by his glorification of visible beauty and visible goodness because they have been accustomed to 'pursue invisible beauty and invisible goodness. They think that he is a hedonist who is contented with what is and who does not 'look before and after and pine for what is not'. But his supreme mood is that of the first verse in the Isavasya Upanishad: 'All this is indwelt by God and is God and is transcended by God' (*Isavasyam idam sarvam*). In that verse the words *idam sarvam* (all this) are as important as the word *Isa*. He goes so far as to say:

'Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads! Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark dark corner of temple with doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee.

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the road-mender is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil.

Deliverance! Where is the deliverance to be found? Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation; he is bound with us all for ever.' (*Gitanjali*, pp. 8, 9.)

But all this does not mean mere pantheism. God is not bound and circumscribed by His creation. Nor is His creation a mere dream, a mere mirage, a mere phantasmagoria, a mere delusion, a mere illusion, a mere hallucination. He says also:

'Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest and lowliest and lost.' (*Gitanjali*, p. 10.)

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He says further :

> 'Deliverance for me is not renunciation. I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight . . . So I will not shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight. Yes, all my illusions will burn into illuminations of joy and all my desires ripen into fruits of love.' (*Gitanjali*, p. 73.)

Heaven can be on this earth itself and need not be sought after death. *Jivanmukti* (liberation) is not liberation *from* life but liberation *in* life. The signet of Eternity is imprinted on each fleeting moment. The realisation of the Soul is the sacrifice of the ego, and the sacrifice of the ego is the realisation of the Soul. He says :

> 'Man's abiding happiness is not in getting anything but in giving himself up to what is greater than his individual life — the idea of his country, of humanity, of God.' (*Sadhana*, pp. 151, 152.)

That is why Tagore does not play with such terms as Advaita and Visishtadvaita or Dvaita. He does not exalt one over another amongst the various types of the bliss of Beatitude or amongst such divine sadhanas such as *Nishkama Karma* and *Dhyana* and *Bhakti* and *Prapatti* and *Jnana* and *Anubhava* and *Sakshatkara* (unselfish righteous work, meditation, devotion, surrender, wisdom, experience and realisation). In reality all these meet and mingle. Heart and head and hand yearn to meet and mingle. Tagore's philosophy is, in short, the realisation of the Infinite in the Finite, and of the Finite in the Infinite. It is the enjoyment of *Satchidananda* in itself and also always, at all times, in all things. It is contained in a nutshell in his prayer :

> 'O, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the One in the play of the Many.' (*Gitanjali*, p. 63.)

Now and then we see how these elements of humanism and of the joy in God's world are carried a little too far, just as in Buddhism and some systems of Hindu philosophy the aversion to the manifested universe and the beings who are in it is carried too far. Let us take, for instance, the following poem in the *Gardener* :

> At midnight the would-be ascetic announced : 'This is the time to give up my home and seek for God. Ah, who has held me so long in delusion here ?'
>
> God whispered 'I', but the ears of the man were stopped.
>
> With a baby asleep at her breast by his wife, peacefully slumbering on one side of the bed.
>
> The man said : 'Who are ye that have fooled me so long ?'
>
> The voice said again : 'They are God', but he heard it not.
>
> The baby cried out in its dream, nestling close to its mother.
>
> God commanded : 'Stop, fool, leave not thy home', but still he heard not.
>
> God sighed and complained : 'Why does my servant wander to seek me, forsaking me.' (*Gardener*, p. 130.)

In another poem he says : 'I shall never be an ascetic' (*Gardener*, p. 78). The fact is that there are two ways of seeking God — detachment and renunciation. Janaka chose the former (*Karmanaiva hi samsiddhimasthitah Janakadayah, Gita*, III. 20). Yajnavalkya and Sankara and others chose the latter. Buddha also did so. Sri Krishna says : *Varta eva cha karmani* (I stay in Karma, *Gita*, III. 22). We can live and know and see God in Karma ; we can also live and know and see God by forsaking Karma. See *Gita*, III. 4, where Sri Krishna says : '*Naishkarmya* is not attained by merely refraining from Karma ; nor does a person attain perfection by merely adopting the dress and other externals of renunciation of action.' 'The action which is not done for God and in a sacrificial spirit of detachment will bind us. Work in the spirit of *Asanga* (non-attachment) (*Gita*, III. 9).

In conclusion I wish to say that in Tagore we meet the commingling of the highest idealistic philosophy of India and the highest pragmatic philosophy of the West. I have shown above how now and then we see what seems to be an extra emphasis on enjoyment and a turning away from renunciation — an emphasis on humanism more than on divinism. But

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what he affirms is that 'the real with its meaning read wrong and emphasis misplaced is the unreal' (*Stray Birds*, p. 254). 'All ages pass with the finding and seeking of Thee and me' (*Gitanjali*, p. 71). He has given thus his philosophy in philosophic terms as he did in poetic terms in the saying :

> 'The individual *I am* attains its perfect end when 'I' realises its freedom of harmony in the infinite *I am*. That is its *mukti*, its deliverance from the thraldom of Maya, appearance which springs from Avidya, from ignorance, its emancipation in *Santam Sivam Advaitam* in the perfect repose in truth, in the perfect activity in goodness, and in the perfect unity in love.' (*Sadhana*, p. 85.)

In short, the Mahavakyas (*Prajnanam Brahma, Tattvamasi, ayamatma Brahma,* and *Aham Brahmasmi*) read in the new light thrown by Tagore's poetry and philosophy contain the quintessence of his philosophy and religion. The Upanishadic words such as *Sat-Chit-Ananda, Brahman* and *Atman* and *Isa, Sundaram Santam Sivam Advaitam* (Existence, Knowledge, Bliss, Infinite Immanent Lord, Beauty and Peace and Auspiciousness, the Infinite One) contain the heart of his philosophy and religion which I can best describe as Universal Philosophy and Religion.

SAINT RAIDAS AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

RAMLAL

The luck of a man who believes and regards the Lord to be everything for himself, is indescribable. The devotees belong to an undecaying lineage. Wealth and prosperity anxiously long and wait to offer their obeisance to them. Saint Raidas was such a man, most devoted to God. He was elderly to saint Kabir. The grace of the Lord placed him on the highest rank. The devotion to the Lord raised him high from a low status. He is regarded as one of the main twelve disciples of the great religious teacher, Ramanand. Saint Raidas enriched the sainthood by stimulating the Indian thoughts, overshadowed with the stale mayavada, the conception of the whole world to be unreal, discoloured by the materialistic doctrine of Buddhism and badly affected by the Muslim invasions, — with a social revolution. Having kindled the celestial flame of the light of wisdom of the divinity without attributes, in the hearts full of devotion and having dispelled the gloom of ignorance, Raidas and Kabir, the chief disciples of Swami Ramanand acknowledged the union of knowledge and devotion to be the origin, or the main foundation of their sainthood.

Saint Raidas was a great historical necessity of medieval India. He protected the spiritual side of the Indian culture from the bigotry of the alien rulers. He blessed a great part of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with his devotional practice and sadhana. He supported the faith in the divinity in an atmosphere of political despair. He attempted the public welfare through the devotion to the Lord. The saying of Kabir, 'Raidas is the saint amongst the saints', holds good.

Saint Raidas was born in Kashi in the caste of cobblers (chamar i.e. shudra). His father Raghu and the mother Churbinia were good-natured and intensely devoted to God. This is why they got the credit of giving birth to Raidas. Immediately after taking birth, Raidas ceased drinking his mother's milk. All were taken aback. Ramanand came to Raghu's house, glanced at the child and blessed it to drink the milk. It is alleged that even in his previous birth, Raidas was a disciple of Ramanand and was a brahman by caste. Owing to some mistake in the service of his preceptor, he had to take his birth in a low caste. Ramanand held the couple in high admiration for their giving birth to a child highly devoted to the Lord ; he praised their great luck and repaired to his monastery.

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Raidas was brought up with care. The divine virtues began to develop in him automatically. He began to feel attracted towards the saints and sages from his very childhood. He was wont to be beside himself with joy on hearing the coming of a saint. The service of a saint was a matter of great joy to Raidas. He never lacked in any way towards obeying his parents and increasing their happiness. His bent of mind was the cause of a great and grave anxiety for them. They feared that he might leave the house and take to renunciation at such an early age. They resolved to fetter him with the wedlock.

Raidas' work was to sew the shoes and chant the hymns in the praise of the Lord in ecstasy :

> 'My soul, if you will not sing the attributes of Gopal, the Lord of the cowherds, you will never get the real happiness. Only by taking refuge in His feet, you will have the right knowledge. One who is devoted to Ram, does not adopt any other course.'

A great portion of what he earned by making shoes was utilised by him in the service of holymen. He was fully confident that whosoever serves other than the Lord goes undoubtedly to hell, the kingdom of Yama. The routine of his life was nothing but to remember continually the grace of the Lord. He was out of the range of fear having tied his unsteady mind to the immovable feet of God. He was wedded at the very entrance of the first gate of adolescence.

His wife was good-natured and most virtuous. The entire contentment of her married life rested in fulfilling every desire of her husband. It was her sacred diurnal routine to look after his comfort, who was so devoted to the service of the Lord. Consequently the wedding proved helpful in the way to devotion; the household stage could not be an impediment for the couple. They both were on their guard in doing their duty. The parents of Raidas were excessively pleased at such a happy life. There was no scarcity of wealth and prosperity in the house but having found a great amount of money spent lavishly by Raidas in serving the saints, they were highly annoyed and displeased. Raidas was disinterested in the domestic affairs and lived like a lotus in the water. But it did not please his parents, for they went on accumulating wealth by hard labour and he, sitting idle, spent the same in the service of the saints and sages. They turned the couple out of the house. Raidas began to live near the house, having set up a small hut under a tree. He did not resist the will of his parents in the least. He engaged himself in the adoration of the Lord.

Gradually he got distinction and began to be known by the saints of remote regions. He started adoring the Lord, the sanctifier of the sinners, the redeemer of the guilty. Sitting in solitude, he was wont to address his tongue :

> 'Go on repeating the name of the Lord Rama; this will indeed free you from the clutches of the king of hell — Yama.'

He never cared for the scarcity of money and entirely dedicated himself to God. He wedded himself to the lotus feet of the Lord for ever. His dwelling served as an assemblage of saints and sages. He had got admirers in Kabir and others. The disciples of Ramanand had great veneration, devotion and faith in him. The sayings of saint Gani Mamur wielded great influence on his devotional practice. He was an inhabitant of a city that was totally free from worry and anxiety. His saying runs thus :

> 'The name of the city of Begampur, and there is neither worry nor anxiety,
> Says Raidas, a chamar from head to foot,
> That whosoever abides in that city, is my companion.'

To live in the company of the saints was a blessed life in his opinion. He kept himself ever occupied in the adoration of Nirguna Rama, God above attributes and lodged complaint :

> 'O Lord, how should I adore you, the fruits and flowers befitting your service are not available; the calf has rendered the milk of the cow into garbage; in such a circumstance my mind can only serve the purpose of the incense and the lighted lamp.'

He was ever intoxicated in the ecstasy of divine love. It was his firm faith that Rama would ferry him over the ocean of the world.

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He did not get a single shell from his father and mother. His contentment lay in whatever he earned daily. He gave shoes to the saints and the devotees of the Lord without charging the price. Now and then he had to remain without food at nights. A small hut constituted his property, the image of the Lord was installed in it; as regards himself, he lived under a tree with his wife.

One day he was sewing shoes under a tree. Holy discourses were going on in the assembly of many a saint. Saint Raidas saw a stranger coming towards him in the garb of a recluse. He took the dust of his feet to his forehead, served him food and attended him at his best. While departing, the guest desired to present a parasmani — philosopher's stone believed to convert a baser metal into gold by a mere touch — to him but the saint did not express any curiosity about it. He tried to impress him by converting iron (pieces) into gold but the most invaluable wealth of Raidas was the name of Lord Rama. He did not like to retain it with him but the guest placed the same in the thatch upwards; told him to utilise it in the time of need. The mind of Raidas ever anxious to free itself from the bondage of samsara could not be entangled with the touch-stone. His eyes were ever fixed on the Lord; at the approach of terrible griefs and troubles, he took to the remembrance of God's name. Even in dream, he could not think of the precious stone. After a few days, the same guest in the garb of a recluse came to him and asked about it. Raidas told him, 'Even this I could not have in my mind that there remains the stone in my hut. It is a good luck that you have come here. Please take the same with you.' Having taken the stone, the guest departed in no time. Raidas was taken aback at his sudden disappearance. It was not at all in his knowledge that the Spouse of Goddess Lakshmi had set out to test him but it was beneficial on his part that His maya (illusion) was defeated and saint Raidas was blessed by the vision of the Lord in person. The divine sports are full of wonders. The Lord is specially busy in defending and protecting His devotees and servants. This kind of sport delights him very much. Raidas began to get five gold-coins everyday in his small basket containing the articles of worship. Raidas humbly offered prayer, 'Lord, keep me at a distance from your maya, I am a dealer, banjara, in Your name only. I crave for nothing else.' The Lord presented Himself in a dream and told him, 'I know the feelings of your immaculate heart; I understand well that you don't want anything, but my pleasure lies in your acceptance of these gold coins.' Saint Raidas utilised the money so kindly offered by the Lord, in building a temple and appointed a priest to attend the ceremonial worship. Having everyday obtained the view of the sikhara of the temple and its sacred banner, he thought himself lucky and highly blessed.

Once a rich man came to hear his discourse and after its coming to an end, the saints took and drank the ambrosia (sacred water) of the feet of the Lord. The rich man made light of that. He did receive it in his hand but cast it aside without letting anybody know it lest he drank water at the house of a chamar (born in a low caste). Some of its drops fell on his clothes. Having gone to the house, he immediately bathed and put on new ones and handed over the former to the sweeper. The sweeper put them on; his body began to transform itself into celestial brilliance and the rich man fell a victim to leprosy. In order to get rid of the loathsome disease, he came to take the holy water at the residence of Raidas but lacked in faith and reverence. Saint Raidas said to him, 'The ambrosia you will get now will be nothing more than mere water.' The rich man out of great repentance apologised. He was cured by the grace of the saint and by the merit of the divine discourse heard by him.

The sayings of Raidas influenced Queen Mirabai in a special manner. She acknowledged him as her preceptor, the greatness of the saint is revealed in her divine songs. It was Saint Raidas who sanctified and blessed the palace of Rana Sanga with his august presence. He was blessed by the Lord with a long life; Saint Kabir gave himself to the holy ghost in his presence. It is an ascertained fact that he

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accepted the spouse of Rana Sanga's son as his disciple. The Jhali queen of Chittore too was influenced by him. During her pilgrimage to Kashi, she extended invitation to him to pay a visit to Chittore and he went there and performed many a miracle. Mirabai venerated him through her saying, 'I have been blessed by a perfect guide in Raidas.'

Raidas got the vision of the mother Ganga in the water of a cask. A brahman used to go daily to offer worship to the mother Ganga (Ganges), on behalf of some body. One day Raidas gave him shoes without charging any price and humbly requested him to offer a betel-nut on his behalf to the mother Bhagirathi. He gave him the betel-nut. The brahman duly worshipped the mother and out of sheer negligence cast the betel-nut of Raidas on the surface of the water. To his great surprise, Mother Ganga herself stretched her hand to accept the offering. He began to praise Saint Raidas through whose grace he was able to have the vision of the Mother. This news spread in Kashi like anything but Mother blessed Raidas all by herself. The holy discourses were going on, the saints were seated encircling Raidas and a cask full of water was kept before the assembly. Raidas and the other saints themselves saw that the mother Ganga emerging out of the water, was herself offering a bangle. Raidas paid due obeisance to the Mother and gladly received the same as the symbol of her grace.

Raidas was not only a saint of a high order but a great poet too. He sang the glory of the Abstract, invisible aspects of the Lord above attributes. His sacred sayings led the masses towards the spiritual and intellectual awakening along with social enlightenment. He acknowledged Rama to be the supreme light. He sang:

> 'I was totally unworthy of any reverence, but through the grace of the Lord, a sinner like myself has become an object of veneration.'

He duly expounded the nirguna aspect of the Lord in all its originality. He firmly believed that righteousness leads to securing devotion to the Lord and through that a man steers through the ocean of the world. Saint Raidas was a poet of sweet sentiments, he was a great ascetic, a Rajayogi. He says:

> 'A king sleeping on the bed of roses,
> Turned to be a mendicant in a dream;
> And was considerably grieved,
> In spite of his royal possession;
> So is the case with me.'

He was a cultured saint. He repaired to his divine abode nearly at the age of one hundred and twenty-five years.

FULL OF SWEETNESS IS THE DUST OF THE EARTH

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Sweet are the heavens and full of sweetness
Is the dust of the earth. I have laid to heart
These sacred words—the message of life's fulfilment.
Whatever gifts of truth I have received
In my life, they remain unfaded in
This sweetness. So these words announce from the
Far end of death: The joy of eternity
Spreads, proving all loss unreal. When
I will carry the earth's last touch I will say:
I have worn on my brow the holy mark
Of thy dust and seen the undying light
Behind the veil of fog. In this thy dust
Truth has assumed its form of joy.—
Knowing this,
I touch thy dust with my head in salutation.

(February 14, 1941.)

(Translated by Abinash Chandra Bose)

NOTE:—The italicised sentence is quoted from *Rigveda*, I. 90.7. The poet passed away on Aug. 7, 1941.

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PILGRIMAGE TO SABARI MALAI

SWAMI SUDDHASATWANANDA

It was a long-standing desire of mine to make a pilgrimage to Sabari Mālāi which is one of the most important places of pilgrimage in the Kerala State in South India. I heard so much about its popularity and prominence and the more I heard of it from different sources, the more intense became the desire to visit the same.

But however we may plan and desire, unless the Lord sanctions it and draws us to His holy feet, it will remain unfulfilled. Luckily for me, at last the Lord willed, and it was possible for us to be blessed with His *Darṣan*.

Swami Chidbhavanandaji, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Tapovanam near Trichinopoly, who had been to Sabari Malai in the previous year, made arrangements to go this time also and kindly invited me to join him at Trichinopoly junction on the 15th of December, 1960. Fourteenth was the birthday of His Holiness Srimat Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. After performing Puja and Homa at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, I started by Tuticorin Express and when I reached Trichinopoly junction, I was glad to meet there Swami Chidbhavanandaji and four other Swamis and two Brahmacharis. A tentative programme was already sent to me and it was programmed that we should get down at Dindigul station which is about 260 miles from Madras, and should first go to see the famous Periyar Dam and sanctuary. There two more Swamis and some devotees were awaiting our arrival.

Swami Chidbhavanandaji told me that three 'Ambassadors' would be waiting for us outside Dindigul station. I thought, some friends would have come to take us to Periyar Dam and when we went outside of the station, we saw to our pleasant surprise that three spacious Ambassador cars were kept ready for us to take us to Periyar. We were actually to go to Tekkadi, a distance of about 90 miles from Dindigul and from there in a motor launch to the sanctuary and the dam. We reached Tekkadi Travellers' Bungalow where sumptuous food was kept ready for us. After food and a little rest, we got into the motor launch and started with great expectations to see herds of wild animals which abound in the very thick and dense forest on both sides of the river. We heard from those who had visited the sanctuary before that they had seen herds of elephants and bisons, of all sizes, and so many other animals who come to the river side during certain hours to drink water. The motor launch charges about Rs. 15 to take the visitors round the sanctuary right up to the Periyar Dam, a distance of about 12 miles from the Tekkadi T.B. and bring them back. The launch can be shared with others and about 20 persons can be accommodated at a time. The river is pretty wide and very deep and the natural scenery is quite enchanting. About twelve of us were in the launch and all the twelve pairs of eyes were looking around with much eagerness if they could see the animals. A little sound anywhere would at once engage our attention. But to our great disappointment we could not see even a jackal anywhere. We reached the famous Periyar Dam, which irrigates thousands of acres of land both in the Madras and Kerala States and generates electricity which is utilised by the Government of Madras. We went across the Bund which was about 1,200 feet long and it was a wonderful sight — on one side a small river was flowing about 300 feet below and on the other side the water was full to the brim.

While returning some of us saw something black at a distance on the other side of the river and we hurriedly got into the launch with much of expectation. Some were saying that it would be a bear, some a bison, some a small elephant, but all our ignorant specula-

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tions were set at rest when we came near it and saw to our utter disappointment that it was the burnt trunk of a dead tree. On our return journey also, we were seeing around with intent gaze but the animals that day did not care at all for our eagerness. We have seen all those animals in different zoos but to see them moving majestically in herds, in their own abode, free and independent, has got a special charm. Our failure to see any animals that day need not dishearten other would-be visitors because we have been told that 75% of the visitors can see them.

From Tekkadi, we were brought to a village about 18 miles away to the house of Shri Ramraj who was our host. Shri Ramraj is a Tea and Cardamom Estate owner. One of his brothers was observing some vows and was preparing himself to visit Sabari Malai. This would be his fifth visit. Orthodox people observe certain rigid austerities before visiting the famous shrine. They start observing the austerities from 40 days before. The following are the rules observed by orthodox pilgrims : They should wear some black or blue cloth, they should not shave, they should observe strict Brahmacharyya for those 40 days, they should carry a bundle on their heads, which will contain cocoanut, sugar candy, Bibhuti (holy ash) etc. on one side for offering unto the Lord and on the otherside there will be foodstuff which they would cook and eat while at Sabari Malai. And during those 40 days they should try to remember Lord Aiyappan, the presiding Deity of Sabari Malai and should pray to Him for His grace. The idea behind practising the austerity is to try to forget bodily comforts and body-consciousness and divert the care and attention that would have been taken for the body, to the thought of the Lord.

There are two routes to reach Sabari Malai. One is the longer route and it is the traditional, orthodox route. In this route the journey on foot starts from Erumeli and one is to cover 41 miles on foot before reaching Sabari Malai. One can come by bus or car to this place from Kottayam, a district town of Kerala State. It takes about three days to cover the distance and during this long journey on foot, pilgrims try to remember the Lord constantly. The other route is much shorter and those who follow this route, are to walk only about 9 miles from a place called Mount Estate. There is regular bus service from adjacent towns up to Vandi Periyar and during the festival days buses go up to Mount Estate, a distance of 9 miles from Vandi Periyar. Many pilgrims start walking from Vandi Periyar. If they start early in the morning they can reach Sabari Malai in the evening covering 18 miles. The most auspicious time to visit Sabari Malai is the middle of January every year. About two lakhs of people wend their way to this holy place from different parts of Kerala and South India. Temporary shops and choultries (inns) are opened at intervals on the way for the convenience of the pilgrims, but Sabari Malai being too small a place, the pilgrims are to face much inconvenience for want of shelter and especially proper sanitary arrangements. In order to avoid these difficulties, pilgrims start going there from the middle of December. Most of the pilgrims who go there carry foodstuffs and cooking vessels and a small bedding. Some stay there for one night, some for three nights and many of those who go in the middle of January, camp four or five miles away on the way, go to Sabari Malai, have Darsan of the Lord and come back to their camp in the evening. As Sabari Malai is situated in the midst of a range of hills, and 2,000 feet in altitude, it will be a bit cold in December and January especially during nights. There are no brick built choultries ; so pilgrims are to stay in small huts made of leaves and grasses. Because of joy due to the fulfilment of their desires and because of their deep devotion to the Lord, most of the pilgrims do not mind the physical hardship. When the mind is full of satisfaction and peace, nobody minds the physical discomforts. After all they undertake the pilgrimage because of some urge from within and out of their own sweet will knowing fully well the difficulties and hardships that they will have to bear with. Some devout pil-

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grims take a vow to visit this holy spot for eighteen times in eighteen years and thousands go there more than once. Many go there to get their diseases cured and many go there for the fulfilment of their desires.

As the days go by, Sabari Malai and its presiding Deity Lord Aiyappan are becoming more and more popular and are attracting larger number of pilgrims every year from remote corners. They go there with much of faith and devotion and their hearts become contented and minds full of joy when they reach the long-cherished destination. The devotion of sincere devotees makes the presence of the Lord felt more intensely and what wonder and doubt is there that the Lord's presence is felt there when thousands and thousands of devout pilgrims, pour out their hearts' devotion and constantly sing and dance in praise of the Lord.

Shri Ramraj was a very kind host. He has a nice electrified bungalow with modern amenities though it is in a remote village. As soon as we reached, there was worship and singing in the shrine, in which we too participated. After meals we went to bed at 11 p.m. and got up at 3 a.m. After bath, we all assembled to their Puja room where a beautiful picture of Lord Aiyappan was kept nicely decorated. Bundles that were to be carried on heads by the devotees were kept in front of the Deity. Puja and Arati were performed and we started ceremoniously for our pilgrimage singing Bhajans. Many villagers accompanied us to the outskirts of the village where four cars were waiting for us to take us to Mount Estate where we reached at 7-30 a.m. Shri Ramraj had sent his brother two days in advance with sufficient foodstuff, vessels etc. to make all arrangements at Sabari Malai for our food and accommodation. We had heavy tiffin at Mount Estate, all arranged by our host and at 8-30 a.m. we actually began our pilgrimage on foot. There were nine Swamis, two Brahmacharis and three devotees, in our party and most of us carried our own very small beddings and tiny handbags. With sticks in hand, we started climbing the hills remembering Lord Aiyappan, praying for His benign blessings and shouting in chorus: 'Swamiyē Saranam Aiyappa' (O Lord Aiyappa, we take refuge unto Thee). During the course of the journey, whenever any pilgrim meets another, he greets him saying 'Saranam Aiyappa' and we heard many pilgrims repeating 'Saranam Aiyappa' or 'Aiyappa Saranam' or 'Harihara Sutanē Saranam' throughout their journey. Ladies between the ages of 10 and 50 do not visit Sabari Malai. Though it was strictly enforced before, nowadays a very few ladies also go there.

We were to cover 9 miles on foot and cross several hill ranges. There was no good road, in some places there were dense forests which abound in wild animals, especially elephants, serpents etc., but they do not harm the pilgrims. The first hill that we had to cross was very high and by the time we got at the top, almost all of us started gasping and perspiring and the more we got tired and exhausted we started shouting 'Saranam Aiyappa' more loudly. The highest peak that we had to cross was 4,320 feet. After covering about 6 miles, we saw some huts just built and some leaves spread on the ground and a nice spring close-by. Quenching our thirst, we lay down there for some time and having some tiffin, again resumed our journey. Some pilgrims, seeing us monks, offered us some tiffin and hot drink. While we were about a mile away from our destination, we saw two gentlemen waiting there with drinking water and tumblers. As water was not available there and as there the pilgrims had to do steep ascent and descent, they naturally got very tired and exhausted and they heartily blessed those kind gentlemen who gave them drink to their hearts' content. Their idea to carry water all the one mile ascending the hills, was to serve the pilgrims, and thereby acquire some merit.

Our joy knew no bounds when the temple top was first sighted. We forgot all our exhaustion and shouted 'Saranam Aiyappa'. We started walking hurriedly as if competing with each other to reach the feet of the Lord first. It was 1-30 p.m. when we found our-

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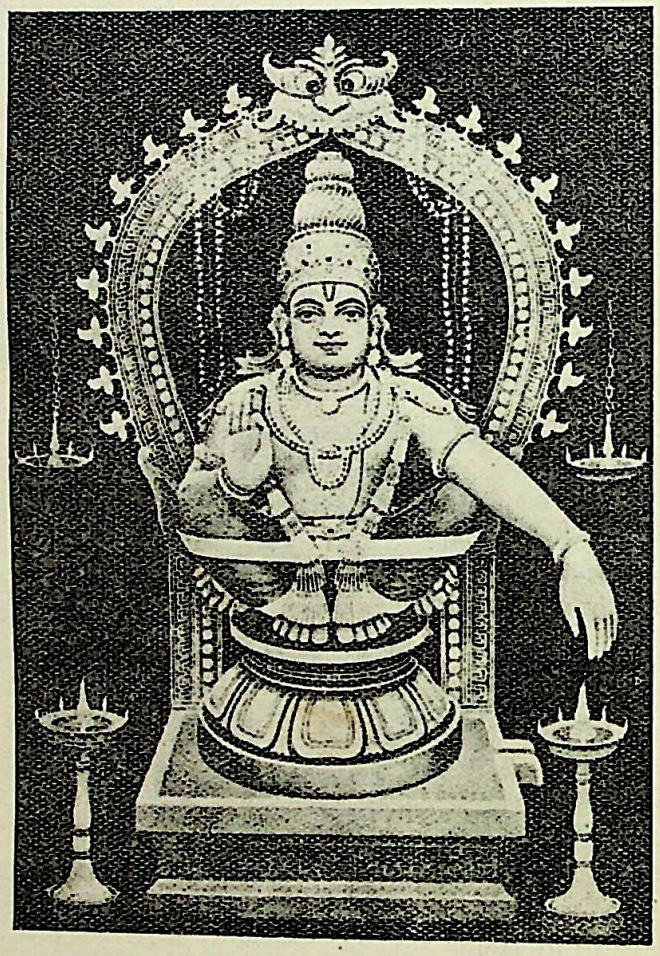
selves at the foot of the temple. There were eighteen steps. Though there were two or three entrances, pilgrims when they come first must enter through the main gate and when they leave Sabari Malai they should also come down by the same steps facing the Deity in the front. At other times, they should use the other gates. Before getting on the steps, he who comes for the first time, should break a cocoanut on the first step, he who comes for the second time, should break the cocoanut on the second step and so on. We entered into the temple compound, but the main temple had been closed about half an hour ago. We prostrated in front of the main shrine and came to our hut which was about 100 feet away from the temple. We took four hours to cover the route of nine miles excluding the time that we spent in resting on the way.

After bath in the tap provided by the Government for the pilgrims, we had our meals. Taking a little rest, we went round the temple and saw that a number of shops were being built, and some had already been opened. One or two temporary hotels also were there. There is a Branch Post Office, a Police Station and a P.W.D. office where the staff stay throughout the year. The temple of Lord Aiyappa is situated on a raised mount in the middle of a plateau. In the temple compound, there are two small temples of Ganesha and Siva. On one side, there are several rooms used by priests and temple officers. The main temple is quite small. In the front, there is a shed where pilgrims stand and have Darsan of the Lord. The surrounding platform is quite spacious where two to three thousand persons can have standing accommodation. There are two small tanks near the temple known as Bhasma Tirtha and Kumbhodaka Tirtha and about a furlong away there are two small temples of Malikapuram Amma and Kochukadutha Swami. The altitude of Sabari Malai is about 2,000 feet from the sea level.



Lord Aiyappa

In the evening at about 6 p.m., we went to the temple and were very happy to have darsan of Lord Aiyappa. All the devotees who assembled there started singing Bhajana while Aratrikam was going on. The whole atmosphere became so serene and elevating! All were full of joy and completely forgot their exhaustion. After the devotees dispersed, we went near the main entrance to have a clear vision of the Lord. The image which is made of eight particular metals, is about two feet in height with two hands. It is so beautiful and enchanting! The Lord is seated on a stone stand in particular yogic posture. The face is so sweet and divine! One cannot but love and feel attracted at the first sight. The whole body of the Deity is besmeared with sandal paste in the forenoon which is removed before Abhisekam (bathing) which takes place at

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5 a.m. next morning. The temple is opened at 4-30 a.m. and remains closed from 12-30 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. After evening Aratrikam and night offering, again the temple is closed at about 9-30 p.m.

It will not be out of place to give a short history and significance of Sabari Malai. 'Mālāi' means hill. Sabari was a great devoted lady whose name we find in the Ramayana. She performed tapas here in order to have Darsan of Lord Ramachandra who was to pass that way and by whose Darsan she was to attain salvation. A mile away from the temple, on the way to the Pompa river, there is a place called 'Sabari Peetham' where she was actually waiting for her Lord. Some stones are kept there and the place is cleansed before the festival. Because Sabari performed Tapas and attained salvation there, the whole range of hills is called Sabari Malai.

The story of Lord Aiyappa is of Puranic origin. His another name is Bhutanatha, Lord of all beings. As he was born of both Hari and Hara, he is also known as Hariharaputra. He is also known as Dharma Sāstā as he was the punisher of those who disobeyed Dharma, Aryatātā, the father of the Aryan race and so on. Siva took him to Kailasa and one day asked him to go to the earth, and fulfil his mission which was to kill the Asura in the form of a she-buffalo who was creating havoc both among the gods and human beings. Siva gave him a necklace of gems and named him Manikanthan. Accordingly, the young child came to the Pompa river on earth and started crying there. The childless king of Pāndālam who was hunting in the forest, took the beautiful child to his palace and both he and his wife started rearing it as their own son. The astrologer after examining the boy said that he was of divine origin and he would bring everlasting fame to the royal family. The Guru who was entrusted with the education of the boy realised his divine nature and at his request the boy by mere touch, cured the Guru's son of his blindness, deafness and dumbness.

In course of time, the queen bore a son and being ill advised by the Dewan, she wanted to bring an end to Manikantha's life so that her own son might ascend the throne. She feigned to be sick and her doctors said that only tiger's milk could save the queen. Manikantha who was devoted to the queen, volunteered to bring the tiger's milk and came to the forest near the Pompa river. When he came there, the sages and the Bhutas of Siva came to show their respects and narrated him how the Asura, she-buffalo was troubling the gods by attacking heaven. Dharma Sasta being requested by the Devas to save them, challenged the she-buffalo and killed her in an encounter and threw her body on the southern bank of the Pompa river. The gods and goddesses heaved a sigh of relief, and knowing the mission of Dharma Sasta, took the forms of tigers and tigresses. Riding on one of them, Manikantha returned to Pandalam with the whole host of animals. People were bewildered at the terrible sight and started running hither and thither in fear. The king hastened to the spot and fell at the feet of Dharma Shasta craving his pardon. The king begged of him to take charge of the entire kingdom when Sage Agastya appeared there and told the king that Manikantha was none other than the son of Hari and Hara. The king fell on his knees and prayed to him to protect him and his race in spite of the wrong done to him by himself and his wife and offered to build a temple for his stay. Dharma Sasta said, 'O King, there stands the Neela mountain on the eastern side of the Pompa river where lives the devoted Sabari thinking constantly of me. Build a temple for her in that dense forest and instal me also there. The temple should have eighteen steps on the east which will represent five Indriyas, eight Rāgas, three Gunas, Vidya and Avidya. If one is to reach me or wants to have my Darsan, one is to go beyond all the above eighteen impediments. I am none but Nirguna Brahman and only those who by devoted Sādhanā can conquer these eighteen obstacles, will be blessed with liberation by My Darsan. Consider Pompa as the Dakshina

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Ganga, my image as the Siva Linga, Sabari's place as the Sabari Peetham, Sabari Malai as Varanasi and arrange annual festival there in my honour during Makara Sankrānti (middle of January). I shall be always ready to vouchsafe liberation to the people who will undertake the pilgrimage at that time observing certain strict vows and rules. While proceeding to Sabari Malai they should constantly repeat my name as 'Aiyappa' 'Aiyappa.'

So saying the Lord pointed the particular spot where the temple was to be built and the king after constructing the temple as directed installed Lord Aiyappa there on the holy Makara Sankranti day. All the gods and goddesses were present there on that auspicious occasion and the place was looking like veritable Vaikuntha. Sage Agastya came and taught the priest how the worship was to be done. It is said that the divine mason Viswakarma himself built the temple.

So the people firmly believe that Lord Dharma Sasta or Aiyappa is present in the temple. He cures all diseases if sincerely prayed for, administers justice, punishes the evil and bestows salvation on the earnest and devoted souls.

* * *

Next morning, we had been to take a dip at the holy Pompa river of the Ramayana fame. It is about four miles from Sabari Malai and there is steep descent while going and steep ascent while returning. On the way, we saw the Sabari Peetham, stood there in silence for some time and offered our reverence to that devoted saintess. During our journey to and from the Pompa, we were deeply engaged in discussing about some aspects of the divine life of Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra and thereby did not feel at all the tiredness of the journey.

Passing three nights at the sacred Sabari Malai at the feet of Lord Aiyappa, we returned to our respective centres with mind full of pure joy and very sweet memory to be cherished and remembered for a long time to come.

TWO VEDIC ALLEGORIES

(*Quoted by Vyasa in the Gita*)

V. B. ATHAVALE

In my Gita article in the *Vedanta Kesari* (Nov. '60), I have shown that Gita was composed by Maharshi Vyasa to extol the glory of Krishna, because he believed that Krishna Vasudeva was an incarnation of Vishnu Vasudeva, the son of Aditi, for the preservation of 'dharma'. In G. 4. 1, Vyasa has ingeniously suggested that it was he who told the secret of 'yoga' to Vivasvan in the past. When Arjuna asked as to how it was possible for a person born recently, to tell it to Vivaswan, born in the long past, Krishna has answered that he remembered all his past births. The common patronymic name 'Vaasudeva' of Krishna and Vishnu, has been ingeniously used by Vyasa to justify his incarnation theory. The mother of Krishna was Devaki. This is purposely avoided in the Gita. In the Shalya. 62.31, we are told that Maharshi Vyasa was present at Upaplavya prior to the departure of Krishna for negotiations at Hastinapur. '*Upaplavye Maharshi me Krishna Dwaipayano abravit, yato dharmah tatah Krishnah yatah Krishnah tato jayah.*' If Yudhisthira wanted success he must follow Krishna. Gita ends also with the same words.

It is commonly believed that it was Maharshi Vyasa who first split the Vedas in 4 parts (ṛc, yajuh, sāma and atharva). It is easy to show that this splitting had taken place even prior to the Dasharathi Rama period. Ayodhya 32.15, tells that a brahmin of Taittiriya Shakha

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of Yajurveda was near Kausalya. Shatapatha Brahmana, which represents the Yajnavalkya Vajasaneyi shakha of Yajurveda, can also be shown to have been in existence prior to the Pandava period. For, Sh. Br. 12.9.3.3 refers to an incident in which Pratipa and his eldest son Bahlika had taken part. Sh. Br. does not refer to Shantanu, Bhishma or any other later persons. Gita not only refers to ṛc, yajuh, sāma divisions but even the '*brhatsāma*' subdivision of the sāma section.

It will be clear from this that the famous 10 Upanishads were in existence prior to the Pandava period. We shall also see that Vyasa has not only quoted in the Gita, some analogies and allegories, from this 'Samhita' and 'Brahmana' literature, but also discussed the various opinions about 'tyāga' and 'sannyāsa' and he has given his own decision about the debated points.

This old Vedic literature has been traditionally split into two parts, called 'Samhitas' and 'Brahmanas'. 'Samhitas' mean a collection of 'Mantra' portions and it may consist of poems (ṛces) like 'Rc-samhita' or prose sections like the 40th chapter of the Vajasaneyi-samhita, which is known as 'Ishavasya Upanishad'. Brahmanas are the commentaries on the 'samhitas' to indicate the use of the 'mantras' in the various 'yajna' rituals, like the 'Rajasuya' or 'Ashvamedha' sacrifices, performed in ancient times. Sabha 13, tells that Yudhisthira had performed the Rajasuya, just in the same way as Aikshwaka Harischandra had done in the past. Ait. Br. 7.13-18 tells about this ancient sacrifice. At present, the Taittiriya shākhā 'samhita' of Yajurveda, is still a mixture of 'mantra' and 'brahmana' portions, though Taittiriya-brahmana is a separate book. As the brahmanas had to quote often the 'mantra' portions from the 'samhitas', they had evolved a 'pratika' system of quotations. A few opening words of the poem or prose, were chosen as a 'pratika' (representative) of the statement, and the words like '*Uktah*', '*Viduh*', '*Prahuh*' etc. were added to indicate that they were quotations.

Vyasa has followed in the Gita, this system of quotation. For instance, G. 3.42 uses the words, '*Indriyani parāni āhuh*'. It means that the verse is a quotation from Katha. 1.3, 10 and 11. G. 2.18, uses the words '*Uktah*'. It means that the next two verses are quotations from Katha. 2.18, 19. G. 8.26, '*Gati shashwate mate*', suggests that it is a quotation from Prashna Up. 1.9-10 and Mund. Up. 1.2.11. G. 8.21, '*tam ahuh paramam gatim*', suggests that it is a quotation. It refers to a chain relation between '*avyakta, parah purushah and parama gati.*' G. 13.22 '*Paramatmeti cha api uktah, dehesmin purushah parah*', also suggests that it is a quotation. It will be clear from the context, that the quotation is from Katha. 1.3.12.

We can now turn to the various opinions discussed in the Gita, about the principle in 'tyaga' and 'sannyasa'. In G. 18.1 Arjuna asks, 'Sannyasasya tatwam icchami veditum tyagasya cha prathak'. I wish to understand the difference between 'sannyas' (renouncing) and 'tyaga' (discarding). The next two verses contain 4 different opinions about the interpretation of the two words, which apparently mean one and the same thing. (1) *Kamyanam karmanam nyasam sannysam kavayoviduh.* (2) *Sarva karma phala tyagam prahuh tyagam vichakshanah.* (3) *Tyajyam doshavat iti eke karma prahuh manishinah.* (4) *Yajna, dana, tapah karma na tyajyam iti cha apare (ahuh).* The 4 verbs like 'viduh', 'ahuh' etc. and the 4 nouns like 'Kavayo', 'vichakshanah', 'eke' and 'apare', show clearly that they are quotations from some ancient literature.

Let us consider the opinion of 'kavis', who maintain that 'sannyasa' means not to do 'kamya' (motivated) activities. G. 4.16, '*kim karma kim akarma iti 'kavayo' api mohitah atra,*' has already discussed this opinion of Kavis and says that they get confused over the problem of 'karma' and 'akarma'. Vyasa says that 'karma' should be split into 3 parts, instead of two and the confusion vanishes. (1) Karma, (2) Akarma, (non-doing), (3) Vikarma, (doing the opposite). G. 10.37 and 24

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refer to Ushana as an outstanding personality among the 'Kavis' and Brahaspati among the 'purohits'. Mahabharata refers to both these personalities in the following context. Shanti. 37.8,9, tells that when Krishna goaded Yudhisthira to approach Bhishma for the sake of 'dharma' discussions, he said, 'nitishastra' of Ushana and the 'dharma' shastra of Brahaspati are all centered in Bhishma, and unless it is obtained from him by questioning, it will be lost forever, with his death on the 'uttarayana' day. Adi. 100.36, 37 also corroborate it. Ait. Br. 7.13-18 tell that Ushana and Vishvamitra were the priests in the 'Rajasuya-yajna' of 'Aikshvaka Harischandra at Ayodhya'.

The 2nd opinion asks us to discard the fruit of all acts. The 3rd opinion asks to stop all acts, because they are full of faults. The 4th asks us not to discard Yajna, dana and tapa. Vyasa gives his decision about these contradictory statements in the 6th verse. 'Yajna, dana and tapa activities cannot be discarded but they must be performed without any attachment to the acts as well as their fruits.' None of the opinions had advocated the discarding of the attachment of the mind to the act while performing it.

Now we can turn to the two allegories, quoted and skilfully combined in the Gita. One of the allegories is the 'ratha' allegory on the human body in Katha. 1.3, and the second is the 'Ashvattha' allegory, quoted in G. 15.1. The source of the 2nd allegory is Rig. 1.164. 20-22. The author of this hymn is Dirghatama. Ait. Br. 8.23.1, tells that this Dirghatma had performed the Aindrabhisheka ceremony of Daushyanti Bharata. Sh. Br. 13.5.4.11-13 tells that this Daushyanti Bharata was born from Shakuntala in the Kanvashrama, and he had tied 78 horses on the Jamuna and 55 horses on the Ganga for the sake of the Indra. We know that the Bharata story of Vaishampayana begins with the anecdote of Shakuntala, because the Pandavas were his descendents. Here are the quotations.

Ashvattha :—

Dwā suparnā sayuja sakhāyā, samānam vṛksham parishaswajate
tayoh anyah pippalam swādu atti, anashnan anyah abhichakashiti
yasmin vṛkshe madhvadah suparna nivishante, suvate cha adhivishve
tasyedahuh pippalam swadu agre, tanno nnashadyah pitaram na veda.

Ratha :—

Atmanam rathinam viddhi shariram ratham eva tu
buddhim tu sarathim viddhi, manah pragrahameva cha
vijnana sarathih yastu manahpragrahhavan narah, sodhvanah param apnoti tadvishnoh paramam padam.

Now we shall see how Gita has combined them. G. 1.14 describes only one chariot, having 4 white horses. Madhava is the sarathi and Pandava, his friend and relative (*sayujau, sakhayau samanam vṛksham*) is in the same chariot. Arjuna could get both success in the war as well as '*parama-gati*', because he surrendered to his charioteer Krishna Vasudeva. In the 'Ashvattha allegory', two birds of the same feather (Atma-jiva and Paramatma) are sitting on the same 'ashvattha' (human body or the chariot). Jivatma is engaged in eating the sweet fruit (*guna pravrddhah vishaya pravalah*) but his friend is sitting silently and merely loking towards 'jivatma'. If the Jiva merely leaves his eating, he can become the same 'Paramatma', by surrendering all his acts to him. (G. 8.13 refers to the bow and arrow allegory in Mundaka. 2.2.4).

The Vedas have truth for their object. Truth has the mastering of the senses for its object. The subjugation of the senses has charity for its object. Charity has penance for its object. Penance has renunciation for its recondite object. Renunciation has happiness for its object. Happiness has heaven for its object. Heaven has tranquillity for its object.

—*Mahabharata, Shanti Parva.*

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WORLD IN THE ADVAITA SYSTEM

R. S. N. RAMAKRISHNAN

We see around us the earth, water, light and the like. Do they really exist? Some of the advaitins hold the view that this entire Universe exists only in illusory appearance like dreams in sleep. They admit that the avidya-limited-chaitanya is kalpaka or responsible for the illusory appearance of this world. To the question 'What is kalpaka for that avidya', the reply given by them is : it is supposed that there are many avidyas — each being admitted to be kalpaka for its subsequent avidya in constant continuity. That the avidya is regarded in the sacred texts as beginningless may be justified by setting dreams as example in the following manner : Devadatta in his dream perceives a flash of lightning in the sky. Both the sky and the flash of lightning are created in dream at the same time. Though they both have birth yet only the flash of lightning is imagined to have birth — and not the sky. Similarly though in fact avidya has beginning it is viewed to be beginningless like the sky in dream.

Some other advaitins regard the Universe only as illusory—and not the Maya or avidya. The Universe is admitted to have its existence only during the time of perception. In other words an object visible to us has its existence depending upon the life of its perception, whereas Maya is accepted to have the existence of its own from time eternal.

There are advaitins of a third type who do not have belief in the doctrines which declare that this Universe has existence only during the time of perception. So they hold the view that all the objects in the waking state have existence even when they do not become the objects of perception. These advaitins admit three kinds of satta or existence—as (1) Paramarthika-satta or eternal existence belonging only to Para-Brahman, (2) Vyavaharika-satta or existence belonging to the objects such as earth, water etc., that appear in the waking state, and (3) Pratibhasika-satta or existence belonging to the objects like dreams and illusory snake. As such the objects that appear in the waking state has the vyavaharika-satta. This vyavaharika-Jagat or the World in the waking state continues to last even though the perception of it ceases to exist. It is not caused by the three factors viz. (1) either the substrate-knowledge or the contact between the substrate and the organs ; (2) Samskara or impression and (3) dosha or defect—which are requisite for the birth of the illusory objects like dreams and rope-snake. Further unlike the objects in dream the Universe created by God or Para-Brahman under the influence of Maya appears to one and all of us alike. Considering in mind all these facts mentioned above these advaitins do not admit that the World which has vyavaharika-satta is fallacious like dreams and rope-snake. From this it does not follow that this World is admitted to be as real as Brahman is. It has the lower grade of reality. The sacred texts refuse to it the eternal existence at all times. Though this World is not admitted to be illusory like dreams in respect of the facts aforesaid it is accepted to be illusory like them in respect of its being neither existent like Brahman nor non-existent like the horn of a hare. The rope is the upadana-karana, or the substrate and cause of the illusory snake whereas God is the upadana-karana of this Universe which is characterized as unreal.

Just as the rope appears in the shape of a snake due to the dosha which is the altered form of the avidya residing in jivas so also God manifests in the shape of this World that appears in the waking state under the influence of Maya which has God as its asraya or substratum. Without the co-operation of Maya, Brahman cannot become the Creator of this

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Universe. Was this Universe existing before Creation? Yes, it was existing not in the shape as it now appears to be — but in the shape of its substrate, God, just as the illusory snake born of the rope was existing prior to our cognition of it, in the shape of its substrate, rope. The rope does not attain a wee bit of change in its swarupa or form, even though it assumes as aforesaid the shape of a snake expanding its hood. Similarly God also will not be afflicted with the sufferings of His own manifestations.

Here, one may doubt if it would be just to deem that it is possible for God to escape from the miseries of the beings who are no more than His own self, manifested in different forms. Here is the reply to clear up the above doubt: We the jivas perceive objects in sleep. Those objects are indeed fallacious and hence like illusory snake they also must have some distinct adhisthana or substrate. What could that adhisthana be? With the support of the sutra आत्मनिचैवं विचित्राश्हि— these advaitins admit the jiva-chaitanya to be the substrate and cause of the dream-world. In other words, they admit that the dream-world is the manifestation of the jiva-chaitanya. This jiva-chaitanya is not afflicted with the miseries of his own manifestations. For example the jiva-chaitanya enshrined in the body of Devadatta who is the son of Yajnadatta, appears to him in his sleep as a thief standing by his side. He at once binds him to a post and subjects him to hunger and thirst. He is all the while aware that he is the son of Yajnadatta. Does the soul Devadatta who himself is manifest in the shape of a thief, experience the longing for food and water? No, he is not subject to hunger and thirst. Further we find that it becomes possible for the soul to be aware of the truth of his being the son of Yajnadatta. As such it goes without saying that it is all the more possible for God not only to remain without experiencing the suffering of His own manifestations but also to be eve aware of the truth of His being omniscient omnipresent and omnipotent etc.

Another example also may be given to illustrate the possibility for God not to be afflicted with the pains and sorrows of His own manifestations. Sri Adi-Sankara Bhagavat Pada compares the Creator, God to the magician. The magician with his magic power manifests himself in the shape of a different person whom we perceive to have fallen from an elevated place, to have broken to pieces and to have risen to his original state in the next moment. During all these activities the magician does not undergo change in his form. Similarly though Iswara with His Maya-power appears to us in the shape of this Universe, no change in His swarupa can be effected.

Now to the question 'with what purport or motive does God create this World' the answer is: He has no motive. His creation is only a reaction in Him which is dependent upon the actions of the jivas just as the expression of delight in one's face on hearing the birth of a son to him is no more than a reaction without motive.

The mind must convert the senses into a lamp for removing the darkness which obstructs the knowledge of the Supreme Self. This knowledge which is gained by Yogins with the help of the especial instrument of Yoga, is acquired without any particular exertion by men who abstain from worldly objects. The universe is of this nature. The man of knowledge, therefore, becomes never stupefied. Such a man never grieves, never rejoices, and is shorn of envy. The soul cannot be seen with the help of the senses whose nature is to roam about among all objects of desire. Even pious men, whose senses are pure, cannot see the soul with their help, what then should be said of the vicious whose senses are impure. When, however, a person, with the help of his mind, firmly holds their reins, it is then that his Soul sees itself like an object coming in view on account of the light of a lamp.

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EDUCATION IN A DEVELOPING DEMOCRACY

N. M. UPADHYAY

Ours is an infant democracy. As independence dawned on India, we very painfully found that other nations had gone centuries ahead of us. Science and technology had taken strides in Europe whereas we under British subjugation were denied all such privileges of scientific research and advancement. We have to compete with them as S. Radhakrishnan puts it: 'The future progress of the country depends on accomplishing in a few decades the work of centuries'. Then the question arises what means should be employed to cope with the world progress. S. Radhakrishnan in his Preface to the book, *India, Democracy and Education,* by Jossleyn Hennessy very emphatically says that 'the essential means of bringing about a new society is education'.

In our infant democracy there is every likelihood that in the name of democracy many absurdities and incongruities might be perpetuated. The painful experience is not rare that those who are elected to the 'offices' are not always men of calibre and integrity. But should we then be disappointed and cast aside our pledges of democracy? We should here remember that democracy is not a 'static' ideal. It is ever growing and developing itself. The static final end of democracy is virtually the negation of the word 'democracy'. It is in fact a way of life, an attitude, an approach and an art of conjoint co-operative life. But to further the cause of democracy the only potent and effective means is enlightenment — more enlightenment. So democracy is co-extensive with life and life is constantly moulded by educational influences. As Kant once observed that the end of education was to make man, really man. Our education should be man-making education. We should have such men who can run democracy in its proper spirit.

Democracy thus presupposes certain enlightenment and education. We can only serve democracy well if we are brought up and educated in a democratic cult. We should know what and how to contribute to 'democracy'. The one objective that is often spoken is that of 'social efficiency'. Let every individual do what he can do best and let the State impart him the required education. It will not only serve the claims of 'individuality' but would also inculcate social consciousness in them. But here too, we should be very vigilant that social efficiency, as John Dewey in his book *Democracy and Education* puts it, might be misinterpreted and be misappropriated for totalitarian purposes as happened under Nazism in Germany.

Even if we safeguard ourselves against this dangerous drift, there are certain impediments in our way of realising this ideal. Democracy implies 'equality of opportunity and justice' irrespective of caste, creed, colour and sex. But in India the evil forces of casteism, communalism, linguism, provincialism, etc. are playing their heinous role in undermining justice and depriving people of 'equality of opportunity.' The 'equality of opportunity' does not merely mean to offer opportunities of competition and employment to all people. How can a lame person compete with an athlete? How can an ignorant farmer outwit exploiting intelligentsia? So it is likely that even in democracy exploitation may have its sway and the well-placed and privileged classes may exploit those unfortunate, crushed under adverse circumstances. So we shall have to take forward the backward people and offer all possible monetary help to get education and to seek justice. Otherwise the so oft-quoted 'equality of opportunity' will remain a mere phrase with no content and effect.

Our democracy has not only to ensure these economic and social advantages but it has also to fight against (as Nehru once called

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it) 'outworn thinking apparatus'. The old values have become defunct and new ones have not been implanted. Thus I shall name the period as 'crisis of values'. We import ideas from the West without thinking whether these suit Indian conditions or not. For example, in training colleges we employ frequently and indiscriminately such terms as 'Socialization', 'Supervised study', 'Workshop', etc. 'Socialization' cannot be effective till the students have fairly good background and knowledge of the subject. 'Supervised study' has no meaning without adequate facilities of library and guidance. While dealing with interrelation between home, school and community, we quote the conditions prevailing in America. For example, their advocacy of 'Nursery schools' is quite understandable where men and women both earn their living in their respective professions. But we also talk in the same vein and display our enthusiasm for 'Nursery schools' in India. They have their place in big cities and establishments but not in villages or small towns where mothers can better look to their care and habits.

In our Hindu and other Indian religions, we have better consciousness of social obligations and our philanthropic actions testify to it. We have admirable sensitiveness to 'sanctity of life' not only human but animal also. Our attitude towards life is crystallized in the word 'dharma' and this 'dharma' being very comprehensive, embraces our social, religious, political and moral life. It is this 'dharma' which prompts us to desirable actions and dissuades us from unsocial and disruptive activities. The secret of Gandhiji's success in liberating India with non-violent and peaceful means was that he built his ideas on the culture and social heritage of India. He erected the edifice of his political creed on the 'dharma' of the olden times, so deep-rooted in Indian minds. We cannot discard forthwith this 'dharma' philanthropy, social consciousness and theism from Indian people. So the main problem of our democracy is this synthesis and our success or failure mainly depends on this cardinal point.

The pattern of life and government under subjugation cannot serve under liberal democratic conditions; so in the language of 'triad of Hegel' we have to find judicious synthesis. We can devote our philanthropy towards social and rural reconstruction under our gigantic Five-Year Plans. Our 'social consciousness' can be channelised in electing right type of representatives and in giving full co-operation to them. Our 'dharma' should also now teach us an abiding faith and adherence to Constitution and constitutional means. Thus we should have clear cut ideals before us in which we can pin our faith. As the Gita observes 'Man is nothing but his faith', so our faith in democracy and democratic cult will ensure continuity of smooth running of democracy in India.

Our ambitious planning and poor results demand serious thinking from every thinking citizen. To me, one glaring drawback in our planning is that we have not been able to mobilise the masses into 'making of Modern India'. The idea of 'Communes' in China at least teaches us that it is the people actually and their sagacity, co-operation and planning which can ensure good results in our national reconstruction. The so called 'specialisation' hampers more than helps democratic planning. Therefore the key to success is in decentralisation of planning and administration than in centralisation and 'specialisation'.

Gandhian philosophy was an outcome of Indian soil but we have 'borrowed feathers' from the West and the Soviet Russia, and there lies the root of our failures. Build upon the 'Sanskaras' of the people and our success is guaranteed. The biggest stumbling blocks in our way are callous complacency, adoring too much the past and being suspicious towards the present. We have to stir the people out of their 'set grooves' and give them a new vista of thought. Let them understand democracy. It is said that where there is misunderstanding, we cannot be just. So we shall have to inspire faith in democracy and its methodology.

In schools too, we shall have to reorient the

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old outlook. The concept of discipline should be democratic in character. The whimsicalities and idiosyncrasies of those in power should be discouraged in favour of law and regulations by the 'general will' of the people. Not only our methodology would undergo radical change but even contents of subjects should be such as idealise liberality, broad-mindedness, tolerance and interdependence and they not merely make us 'hewers of texts and brewers of book learning'. The exclusiveness of Indian society engendered by schools run by communal organizations should be checked. Thus democracy should be the lodestar of our life — an ideal pervading the whole fabric of our life.

I have pointed before that democracy and education go together. It is democracy which popularises public education. But here too, two questions arise. The first is that of 'quality' and 'quantity' in education and the other is that of participation of public and private sectors in education. The answer to the first question is that in initial stages 'quantity' be encouraged. Adult franchise is hardly thinkable without universal education. But there should be every effort to maintain 'quality' in education. We need men of extraordinary calibre to be leaders in the building of new India. Every effort should be made to cater to the needs of such extraordinarily intelligent children. If we fail in this effort, it will certainly amount to wastage of our assets in men. The other question is not so difficult to answer. Nationalisation of schools is a happy sign but we forget that there are individuals—Comenius and Pestalozzi, in our society also who have that idealism and new vision so essential for vitality of any educational system.

In democracy, we shall have to encourage democratic institutions and there should be every sincere attempt to democratise culture, which in the past was the possession of the privileged few—of the intellectual elites. The apathy to village folk, their folk-lore, dances and festivities shall have to be done away with and genuine interest be shown in them. The aristocracy of a foreign language should pave the way for regional languages and proper and earnest study of the dialects be encouraged. Only in this way we shall serve the cause of education.

In the end I shall reiterate my faith in some of the good old values and my earnest desire to build up democratic ideas on them. The touchstone of working of a democracy is the extent of participation of its members. The more varied the social intercourse and cultural exchange are, the better that democracy will function. It should bridge the gulf between the privileged few and deprived many, between the intellectual and manual workers, and between the learned and the ignorant. Today we need in India confederation of different cultures and languages, not raising their hood in linguism and provincialism, but working in unison and harmony for that 'heaven of freedom' which Tagore once visualized in his *Gitanjali*. Otherwise we shall still remain slaves—slaves in the hands of the exploiters, opportunists and demagogues. Our democracy should be as some Sanskritist has put it —'*Sarvajanahitaya*' and '*Sarvajanasukhaya*' (for the good and happiness of all).

A man must be extremely careful during the early stages of spiritual discipline. You see, a man must not sway his body while climbing to the roof; he may fall. Weak people should hold on to a support while going up the stairs. But it is quite different when one reaches perfection. After the realization of God there is not much for a man to fear.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

Sri S. S. Raghavachar is Reader in Philosophy, Mysore University.

Dr Rama Shanker Srivastava, M.A. (Benares), D.LITT. (Patna), is Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Ranchi University and formerly Head of the Department of Philosophy, Gaya College, Gaya.

Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri is the veteran scholar of Madras, who wrote a book on Tagore even several decades ago.

Sri Ramlal is Asst. Editor, *Kalyan*, Gorakhpur.

Swami Suddhasatwananda is Manager, *Vedanta Kesari* and Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

Prof. V. B. Athavale is from South Satara.

Sri R. S. N. Ramakrishnan is from Ravanasamudram, Tinnevelly.

Sri N. M. Upadhyay is Vice-Principal, Govt. B.Ed. College, Solan, Himachal.

END OF THE YEAR OF VEDANTA KESARI

With this April issue the *Vedanta Kesari* completes its forty-seventh year of service. We thank all the friends of the journal, who have supported it by subscription, advertisement, articles and in other ways. We count upon their continued help in the future also.

The monthly serial on the first page, 'In the loving guise of fun' was continued throughout the year. It gave instances of Sri Ramakrishna's sense of humour at the same time conveying some spiritual truth or instruction. In the coming year a new serial 'From the tree of divine lore', being arranged quotations from different holy books of influence, will be serialised. In tune with the topic of the Special issue, this series has been prepared, like the earlier one, by Sister Savitri, a German devotee.

The serial '*Charaiveti*' was brought out throughout the year, excepting the current month. It should be mentioned that this series was being continued for the last nine years. As 'Subandhu' is outside the country it may not be possible to continue it in future. However, he may send occasional contributions.

The next number will be a special one. The topic chosen for this bigger issue of double the normal size, is '*Holy books of influence*'. More than twenty famous books will be included, leaving out the major scriptures of different religions.

Old Volumes

As the year ends with this issue, those who preserve the magazine may ask for the missing issues now. Some of our new centres as well as some research institutes want to have the old volumes of the *Vedanta Kesari*, specially of the first 25 years. Persons having them may kindly let us know.

The BRAHMAVADIN was the first magazine started through the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. It ran from 1895 to 1914 edited by Sri Alasinga Perumal. Copies are nowadays very rare. Some of our centres are willing to have them. If any reader knows about their existence, he may please let us know.

It is indeed no easy thing to dedicate oneself to the Lord, heart and soul. Many people say: 'I have surrendered myself, my all, to God. I am doing what He tells me to do.' But if we observe their daily lives, we shall see that their actions are quite contrary to what they confess. If they do anything good, they take the credit to themselves, feel highly elated over it, and think: 'Oh, what a great thing I have achieved!' But when even a slight trouble comes to them, they immediately throw the blame on the Lord, saying: 'What a great misfortune He is bringing on me!' This is how most people spend their lives.

—SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.

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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

A HISTORY OF DVAITA SCHOOL OF VEDANTA AND ITS LITERATURE.*

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

Dr Krishna Murthy Sharma deserves congratulation on his undertaking to write a comprehensive history of Dvaita. The present work is the first volume and contains the study of Sri Madhva and Jayatirtha. It may be at once mentioned that the author has a first hand knowledge of his field of survey and performs his task with zeal and ability. His language is clear and effective though somewhat intemperate in many places.

The work proceeds on a simple plan. The introductory chapter resents the usual translation of 'Dvaita' as 'dualism' and offers an alternative designation for the system, namely, 'Svatantra-Advitiya-Brahma-vada'. From page 9 to page 97 an account of Indian thought prior to Madhva is given. From page 98 to page 108 a brief life of Madhva with a discussion of relevant historical questions is worked out. The pages between 109 to 254 are taken up by a descriptive catalogue of all the works of the Acharya. This is undoubtedly a very substantial and useful portion of the work. From the page 255 to 307 a running account of what happened by way of institutions and philosophical writing in between Madhva and Jayatirtha is presented. Then a chapter is devoted to an enthusiastic homage to Jayatirtha. Then follows a survey of his life and works covering about twenty pages. The last chapter aims at giving two illustrations of Jayatirtha's phenomenal dialectical powers.

The plan of exposition suffers from two defects. In the first place the account of Indian thought prior to Madhva is wholly governed by what Madhva himself contends in his works about it. The consequence is that the whole matter gets repeated in the course of the consideration of Madhva's works in detail. Secondly the work before us does not contain a statement, however brief, of the fundamental doctrines of Madhva in a compact and synoptic form. As such the various items of philosophy set forth in a scattered fashion in the course of the notice of the various works do not get their due valuation. This redundancy and gap mar the structure of the work. The last chapter has not got the adequacy to be illuminating.

The author is unfair and superficial in his treatment of Sankara and Ramanuja. The charge that Sankara's system is Buddhism in disguise is not very weighty. Neither Vijnana-vada nor Sunya-vada has anything approaching Nirguna Brahman. The former remains an Anatma-vada in as much as it does not rise to a non-temporal and integral view of Vijnana. Sunya-vada is either pure Nihilism or transcendentalism that failed to achieve complete and decided emancipation from Nihilism. The eternal and absolute Atman of Sankara, unambiguously conceived as a positive essence, is a decisive departure from every formulation of later Buddhism. The only point of affinity between these Schools of Buddhism and Advaita lies in their common opposition to Realism and pluralism. There is certainly a likeness in attitude to empirical reality. But what right have we to assume that the later Schools of Buddhism did not take over their idealistic and non-pluralistic spirit from the Idealistic Monism of the Upanishads? A close survey of the evolution of Buddhism from its earlier Sarvasti-vada phase, its realism and atomic pluralism, to its later idealistic and Monistic phase, is sure to bring out the fact that the later is a dialectical return, though halting and imperfect, to the standpoint of the Upanishads. It is not that Sankara is a crypto-Buddhist but rather the Idealistic and Nihilistic Buddhists are crypto-Vedantins. The whole history of Indian philosophy is misread if one does not comprehend the inner logic of the dialectical evolution of Buddhist thought.

Dr Sarma does not have a high estimate of Das Gupta as a historian of Dvaita. He permits himself to write 'Apart from the fact that even this work does not give us a systematic and coordinated exposition of Madhva's philosophy as a whole or go into the significance and bearings of his philosophical doctrines and their interrelation, its account of Dvaita literature, as such, is very inadequate, ill-arranged and contains many mis-statements of facts' (IV). But this poor opinion of Das Gupta as a historian of

* By Dr.B N. K. Sharma; published by Book-Seller's Publishing Company, Mehedale Building, V. P. Road, Bombay-4. Pp. 353. Price: Rs 17.50.

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thought, — a comparatively less arduous role — does not prevent him from ascribing absolute and infallible validity to Das Gupta's critical estimate of the Visistadvaita thinkers, when the latter says 'the logical and dialectical thinkers of the Visistadvaita were decidedly inferior to the prominent thinkers of the Sankara and Madhva School' (ii). One is tempted to bring forward another estimate, that of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, according to whom Ramanuja has given us the best form of Theism. But this is a dull method, that of measuring schools in the light of the judgments of admittedly imperfect historians. The principal charge against Ramanuja that Dr Sarma brings forward is that 'Say what one might, no genuine Theist could for a moment, consent to tie down his Deity (as does the Visistadvaitin) to an existence perpetually 'qualified' by two attributes (Viseshas) one of which is sentient (cit) and the other insentient (acit) ! ... The world of matter and souls may be bound to God perpetually but such relation could neither be *essential* nor *reciprocal*. The existence of the others must in the last philosophical analysis, be *immaterial* to the innermost constitution of the Supreme' (91).

It is good that the case is put sharply. We can see thereby the implications clearly. Dr Sarma does admit the reality of prakriti and Jiva. Brahman is not the sole cause of the world. Prakriti is the material cause out of which the universe is shaped by the Supreme Being. The Jiva is eternal and uncreated. Dr Sarma refuses support to Prof H. N. Raghavendrachar who, according to him, holds the unorthodox view of 'Svarupa-Srishti' concerning the Jiva (VIII). Further, these eternal and uncreated finites are entirely and unconditionally dependent on Vishnu in their being, nature, functions and even conceivability. If they are neither unreal nor independent, how are they to be regarded in the final sense except as factors integral to the total fact of Divine life? If they are constitutive of God's glory, an eternal relation to them can in no way amount to a limitation or imperfection in God. Can the relation to them be really immaterial or non-essential to Him? It is not a relation merely engineered or set up by them. Such subjection to externally set up relationship is the mark of a finite and dependent being. The relation to the finites must be the expression of the fundamental being of the self-determining Deity. A relation that is not reciprocal is a contradiction in terms. A relation may be asymmetrical or non-symmetrical but still it must be reciprocal. A Theism that construes divine transcendence as exclusive of immanence or as antithetical to it deteriorates into mere Deism. All this is a familiar and well-established argument in modern thought and one has only to acquaint himself with the elucidation of the issue by philosophers like Pringle Pattison and Whitehead.

The other points in the adverse estimate of Visistadvaita are of no serious philosophical significance. That Ramanuja does not read into the Sutras the doctrines of Lakshmi, Bhakti and Prapatti is a strange accusation. Bhakti is known to the Sutra-kara as evidenced by the concept of 'Samradhana' and the other two form contents of Pancharatra pre-eminently and the Pancharatra system is vigorously vindicated in the Sri-Bhashya. The author is no deep student of Visistadvaita. This is proved by the fact that he seeks to establish that the Karikas mixed up with the Mandukya Upanishad are really parts of the Upanishad on the strength of Ramanuja's use of one of them in his commentary on the Sutra. Ramanuja's commentator, Sudarsana Suri, explicitly identifies the passage as a statement of the Purva-pakshin and not that of the Sruti.

Let us now turn to the positive part of the history of Dvaita. There is a laudable display of admiration for Jayatirtha. It is entirely justified. But a certain amount of depreciation of Madhva is indulged in. The following are some instances of the latter attitude.

1. Speaking of the poetic worth of Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya, our author says 'There is no doubt he possessed a natural gift for poetry, but the plan and purpose of his work have made any thing more than a few passing flashes of his aptitude in that direction, impossible. It is not, therefore, a Kavya in the accepted sense of the term' (179).

2. Madhva attached very great importance to the Aitareya Upanishad and took care and pains to work out an elaborate commentary on it incorporating Vaishnava Theology. On the success of his efforts Dr Sarma observes: 'But all said and done ... it is far from certain or easy. ... It is difficult to establish any logical connection with Vishnu, in all cases. Adroit as is Madhva's attempt ... it cannot be deemed convincing to an outsider' (225).

3. Dr Sarma vigorously opposes the view that many of the authorities adduced by Madhva never existed. At the end he comes to a very tame conclusion. 'It would be preposterous to dismiss all untraceable texts of Madhva as

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forgeries and fabrications without due research' (115). In the meanwhile a moderate statement that at least some of them are forgeries and fabrications is left uncontradicted. The denial of the universal does not carry with it the denial of the particular.

4. While introducing the readers to the greatness of Jayatirtha, our author indulges in the following estimate of Madhva's writings: 'Much of his exposition of the philosophy of the Brahma-Sutras and Upanishads, thus, appears to be insufficiently co-ordinated and wanting in depth of argument, richness of detail and fullness of exposition. An extraordinary brevity of expression envelops his views in some obscurity. The treatment of topics is scrappy and sketchy hence diffused and unimpressive. ... Lengthy and seemingly irrelevant quotations from a bewildering variety of sources, extant and other, and interpretations and logico-philosophical discussions of topics, piecemeal cause distraction of thought and mar unity of appeal. ... There are more of crucial ideas than meticulously argued theories' (303).

It is good that the conscience of a scholar is operative in this fashion. But one is not sure that something cannot be said in defence of Madhva's writings. Jayatirtha himself would have resented the tribute that he had 'the boldness and originality to go ahead of Madhva'. While we may thank providence for harnessing Jayatirtha to the task of explaining Madhva, Jayatirtha himself would have thanked God for bringing to him the saving words of Madhva. Madhva's is a creative mind, continuously explorative and without the aids of predecessors like Gaudapada or Yamunacharya and hence he could spare no energy to achieve finish of form. His genius is like a torrent and not a rounded lake. Jayatirtha worked within the framework of a settled system, introducing order and executing details and achieved formal perfection. Such an organization of material always comes from a competent scholastic mind given the task of consolidating gains made by the conquering genius of a master-mind. Progress is the fruit of creativity, restless, innovating and lawless, while conservation and order are the rewards of method, patience and thoroughness of devoted labour. In our adjudgment of the greatness of Madhva and Jayatirtha, we should not lose sight of the qualitative distinction between the two orders of intellectual performance.

There is one part of Dr Sarma's book which the reviewer deplores and that is his account of the various Mutts. It in no way forms part of Vedanta and has the pernicious effect of arousing reactions injurious to the cultivation of Dvaita as pure Vedanta. To enter into controversies concerning the claims and counter-claims of Mutts even for purposes of showing the futility of such disputes is a deviation and a fall. In the next edition, the reviewer hopes that this portion of the work will be dropped out completely. Generating heat at the cost of light is to be spurned.

Dr Sharma performs a solid piece of defensive service to Dvaita by his reply to Sri Ghate's strictures in Madhva's Sutra-Bhasya. Evidently he himself values this part of his work highly (IX). While the defence is spirited and able in so far as it goes, it has to be said that it is incomplete. Sri Ghate has surely erred in overlooking Jayatirtha's justifications and in not taking into consideration the Anuvyakhyana which is offered expressly as a supplement to the Bhashya. The whole body of the data should have been examined for forming a correct estimate of the Dvaita commentary on the Sutras. But Dr Sharma contents himself with a fragmentary vindication. It is necessary to review the entire Bhashya in the manner in which Thibaut has treated the interpretations of Sankara and Ramanuja, fully utilizing all the supplements and elucidations. A discussion of a few Sutras, however crucial—perhaps crucial because easy — is no ample defence. A first-rate work on the merits of Madhva's Sutra-Bhashya is yet to come. The writer of this history of Dvaita is fully qualified for such a signal service. The temper of theological combat must be eliminated and the serenity, productive of real philosophy, must be brought to bear upon this constructive venture. The reviewer hopes that Dr Sharma would respond to this challenge and exploit the fascinating opportunity. When all is said and done, it remains to be acknowledged that Dr. Sharma has produced a work of undoubted usefulness and scholarship.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON TRADITIONAL CULTURES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA: Published under the auspices of UNESCO. Orient Longmans, Madras. Pages 202. Price Rs 6.

The seminar issue on hand is the result of a move and the reflection of a growing concern for the preservation and promotion of the best elements in the traditional cultures of South East Asia. The aim and ambition of the Institute sponsoring these seminars are to benefit those under-developed countries in South East

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Asia, who have a great need to command the benefits of modern science and technology in order to improve their economy and obtain better standards of living. This laudable initiative has indeed borne its fruit as may be construed from these extracts of the reports. Besides these, there are thoughtful papers commending towards the preservation of traditional cultures by scholars.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

A BEAUTIFUL LIFE: SIR M. VENKATASUBBA RAO ABHINANDAN VOLUME (Madras). Pages 108.

The Book under review is an excellent epitome of Sir M. Venkatasubba Rao's life and work as an eminent lawyer, a great judge, a social worker, and a nationalist. His contemporaries and friends, who are all outstanding personalities have opened their hearts in this Abhinandan Volume and made it really a beautiful one. His life, as expressed by Sri P. V. Rajamannar, has been dominated by three great passions viz., justice, thoroughness and reform. He is a master of his brief, a guardian angel of Seva Sadan and a devoted disciple of Sri Rama Devi. As Sri C. P. writes, 'unflinching loyalty to ideals and the gift of comradeship may be regarded as the main attributes of Sir M. Venkatasubba Rao's varied and distinguished career'. The Abhinandan Volume Committee has prepared a very fitting memento of the life of 'one of our finest men and one of our best judges,' who it may be mentioned has recently passed away.

T. S. RAGHAVAN.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SARADA VIDYALAYA, MADRAS

REPORT FOR 1960

In the Girls' High School there were 43 sections with a strength of 1,825 girls. In the S.S.L.C. examination, out of 206 pupils 95% came out successful. The Basic Training School had 177 girls during the year. 16 out of 19 passed in the E.S.L.C. examination. In T.S.L.C. examination both in Senior Basic Grade and Junior Basic Grade all the students sent up came out successful. 177 students were getting stipends. 77 were benefited by scholarships from various endowments. The Higher Elementary School had 908 pupils. The Model Higher Elementary School (Senior Basic) had 632 pupils during the year. The Vidyalaya runs four hostels. The total expenditure of all the constituent institutions amounted to Rs. 2,66,022.20 against a total receipt of Rs. 2,97,793.77, leaving a balance of Rs. 31,771.57 to be adjusted towards the deficit incurred in previous years. While thanking the supporters the Management appeal for help in cash and kind.

OBITUARY

We are sorry to announce the sad demise of Sri H. B. Shankar Rao, on 2nd March at his residence in Thyagarayanagar at the age of 75. He was an indefatigable worker in the cause of the ailing brethren and did substantial work as a collector of funds for the Sri Ramakrishna Math Charitable Dispensary, Mylapore, Madras for a long time, almost from the inception of the Dispensary till a few years back, when it became physically impossible for him to do the work. In fact the last few years of his service in this direction, which was all a pure love of labour was really a fight that he put up with the advancing age. The cause was dear to his heart and very reluctantly did he give up his self-imposed task. He met all the difficulties and even insults which were incidental in his work with patience and calm. He had commenced the work even while he was in service and continued with greater vigour after retirement as Inspector of Income-tax in 1940. A great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna as he was, he came in contact with many Monks of our Order and by his loving manners, unostentatious work and selfless service endeared himself to them. In his last years he was suffering from blood-pressure and general debility to which he succumbed after a brief illness. May the departed soul rest in peace!

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